

1865

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a play

by  
Michael Perlmutter



©Michael Perlmutter  
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CHARACTERS  
(in order of appearance)

JENNA LaFLEUR	.....	a stock company actress for Ford's Theatre in her early/mid thirties
SUZANNE HATTERSON	.....	a stock company actress for Ford's Theatre in her late fifties
CAPTAIN DONNESSEY	.....	a Captain of the Union army in his late twenties/early thirties
JACOB RITTER	.....	a stagehand for Ford's Theatre in his late twenties
CYNTHIA LEWIS	.....	a stock company actress for Ford's Theatre in her late teens/approaching twenty
FRANK MATTHEWS	.....	a stock company actor for Ford's Theatre in his mid forties/early fifties
MARTIN OSBOURNE	.....	a stock company actor for Ford's Theatre in his mid forties to mid fifties
PETER DANIELS	.....	a stock company actor for Ford's Theatre in his late early/mid thirties
NED SPRANG	.....	a stagehand for Ford's Theatre in his mid/late thirties

SETTING

Ford's Theatre, Washington D.C.

TIME

April 14, 1865. Good Friday

*ACT I*

Scene 1	April 14, 1865	11:45 pm.
Scene 2	April 15, 1865	1:30 am

*ACT II*

Scene 1	April 15, 1865	3:20 am
Scene 2	April 15, 1865	7:10 am
Scene 3	Epilogue	

*"America will never be destroyed from the outside.  
If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we  
destroyed ourselves."*

— Abraham Lincoln

The following story though based on true events is fictitious.  
All characters appearing in this work are fictitious.  
Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

#### A NOTE ON THE NOTATIONS:

1. A slash “ / ” indicates the character with the next line of dialogue begins his or her speech (overlapping dialogue).
2. Dialogue in parenthesis “ ( ) ” is expressed aloud, as an aside or unintentionally.
3. Dialogue in brackets “ [ ] ” is not verbalized / MAY be expressed nonverbally.
4. Dialogue in brackets/parenthesis “ [ ( ) ] ” is not verbalized / is an internal aside—purposely unspoken; nor expressed nonverbally; more likely disguised under a smile, stare or a glance.

#### A CLARIFICATION REGARDING TYPOS:

Nope. They aren't. Did I miss one (or two)?—probably. But for the most part, if you see a typo, such as a word repeated, a grammatical error, lower case or UPPER CASE used in place of common punctuation (even a few misspellings), it was, indeed, intended.



ACT I

(At rise:

The curtain is already up as the audience enters. The stage is that of a traditional theatre circa 1860. The space itself is high enough to allow scenery to be flown in from above. A set of painted Parlor room backdrops hang, as if floating in the air, six to eight feet above the floor, offering a clear view to the backstage brick wall. A stage door can be found up right. The stage left and right wing curtains have been torn and various props, furniture and tables are strewn about what is left of the stage. Footlights lay broken, while others cast an ominous light across the floor boards. Flags that once adorned the far left box droop, wilted, torn and frail, over the stage. A copy of the famous unfinished portrait of President George Washington hangs between the flags in silent witness to the pandemonium that has preceded this hour.

JENNA LaFLEUR, an actress in her early/mid-thirties enters stage from the wings and surveys the broken carnage before her. She looks out into the audience; we can see the overturned and broken seats here through her eyes. Lost in thought she looks up into the far left box and watches as her mind replays the moments from earlier this night. Her attention drifts from the now broken railing hanging over the far left box seats—to center stage-- to the orchestra then back out the wings and off through the now locked stage door. She wipes a tear from her cheek as she looks back out into the audience.)

JENNA

[What a waste ... How terribly sad.]

(JENNA reaches into her purse to find a cigarette. She looks from side to side to see if anyone else is there. She stoops down to a foot lamp but just before she lights up:)

Hello?

Hello?

Can we go home yet?

(Again, no reply. JENNA shrugs and lights up. She surveys the stage again; she exhales, looking out again, lost in thought and silence. After a timely pause:)

SUZANNE (offstage)

Miss La Fleur?

(JENNA quickly extinguishes the cigarette, carefully so as to save its remnants for later, as SUZANNE HATTERSON, a matronly woman in her spry fifties enters from the right wings.)

SUZANNE

(Entering; There is a hint of a British accent to her speech:)

I didn't mean to startle you, child. / Should you be—

JENNA

Tidying up.

(She drops the butt in her purse.)

SUZANNE

Let the men [do that].

(As she too surveys the chaos:)

Have you heard anything?

(JENNA shakes her head: no.)

SUZANNE

[Just as well.] We're likely safer here than anywhere else tonight, [I should guess].

JENNA

I'd feel safer in my own bed.

SUZANNE

Then you should have left when you had the opportunity. When we all [did].

(Moves to an overturned sofa)

Give me a hand with this, would you?

JENNA

I thought you said to leave the tidying up to the men.

SUZANNE

Cleaning, [yes]. I had in mind to sit down.

JENNA

(As they aright the sofa:)

Where did this ... ?

SUZANNE

From the box. They tossed it over to make room to carry Lincoln out.

(Once set right SUZANNE sits on one end, leaving ample room for JENNA who remains standing looking out.)

SUZANNE

For the love of Mike, dear, please, Lincoln was in the rocker not this; rest your feet.

JENNA

(Looking out toward the lobby:)

No, I thought ... I saw something—I thought. Hello? Hello!?

SUZANNE

Hello!?

JENNA

Hello!!

SUZANNE

Hello!

(At the back of the audience one of the lobby doors open up. Looking toward the doorway all that can be seen is the silhouette of a soldier [CAPTAIN DONNESSEY], encased in the fire light of the lobby.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

You—Ladies? Yes?

SUZANNE

Good evening, private.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Captain.

SUZANNE

[Our] apologies.

JENNA

Any word?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

On?

JENNA

*(Isn't it obvious:)*

...When we'll be allowed out of here?

SUZANNE

The President. Any word on the President?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

No changes as of yet. They've set him up across the street. Doctors are seeing to him over there.

SUZANNE

And your orders, Captain?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

We're stationed here, Ma'am. Holding down the theatre.

*(Acknowledging Jenna:)*

Miss.

SUZANNE

No one in; no one out?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Basically: yes, Ma'am.

*(His attention is diverted off to someone else in the lobby.)*

Yes, Sir.

*(The door closes. The women are left again to fend for themselves. Pause.)*

SUZANNE

Might as well have that seat.

JENNA

*(Taking a seat after all:)*

All because I wanted to change out of my costume.

SUZANNE

I was moving as quickly as I [could] ... just . . too slow.

*(JENNA says nothing. SUZANNE softly closes her eyes. Silence fills the room more than any words could.)*

JENNA

What are you doing?



SUZANNE

(Unflinching, eyes still closed.)

Praying, child. Times like these call for [prayer].

JENNA

Yes, well ... that's what we get for doing a play on Good Friday. Mock God and he'll mock you back.

SUZANNE

(Still in prayer:)

He doesn't work like that.

JENNA

Mhmmm.

(Pause.)

SUZANNE

Amen.

JENNA

Amen.

SUZANNE

Have your cigarette.

JENNA

...pardon?

SUZANNE

God told me. You need to relax?: Relax.

JENNA

"God" told you?

SUZANNE

[It was a joke.] You think I haven't kept watch on you girls? I know which of you smoke and which of you ... well—smoking's the lesser sin if you catch ...

JENNA

Later perhaps.

SUZANNE

You should give it up, you know: nasty habit—smells terrible. And the men ... well ...

JENNA

Were you there? Did you *see* it happen?

SUZANNE

Quite nearly. Had just exited: over by the fly rope there—so my back was to it all when . . . I heard something or *someone* hit the stage. But he was gone before I turned around and then everyone was on the stage. Half the audience. Doctors. Looters. All clamoring to get to the President's box. I do believe I saw one young man steal away the cushions from the rocking chair Mr. Lincoln was sitting in when he was shot. It's not right.

JENNA

Are we back at war?

SUZANNE

Are we?

(No reply.)

As I said, [we're] safer in here [than out there]: No one out; No one *in*.

(JENNA, still fidgeting, rises and begins to move around.)

SUZANNE

Someone waiting for you? Someone you're / worried about?

JENNA

No, sorry; You?

SUZANNE

[Not to speak of:] my husband should be fast asleep by now. He won't stir till the sun shines. Military canons couldn't wake him.

JENNA

Aren't you bothered for his safety?

SUZANNE

... I should be, shouldn't I?

JENNA

And your children? You have a son, I believe?

SUZANNE

California; heard there was gold. You never asked of my family before. In fact, I can't recall us ever sharing anything more pleasantries before tonight.

JENNA

... I'm sorry. I don't mean to be—...

SUZANNE

You're young; I'm old; We live in different circles; [Think nothing of it.]

(Slight pause.)

JENNA

They're saying it was Wilkes Booth.

SUZANNE

They do say that, yes.

JENNA

But you didn't see him?

SUZANNE

Nor do I have no reason to believe anyone was lying when they said they did.  
You fancy Mr. Booth?  
I've seen him watching you too.  
I see a lot of things.

JENNA

Yes, well ... you can keep those ideas to yourself, thank you.

SUZANNE

Do you know where he went?

JENNA

I don't ... keep company with Wilkes Booth.

SUZANNE

He was here earlier today. He wasn't calling?

JENNA

Collecting his mail, I would gather: the Fords let him use the address here. I have nothing-to—I don't know where you've gotten / your notions ...

SUZANNE

Don't misunderstand me: he's a right looking man. If I were your age, I wouldn't be shy to admit it. I mean nothing by it.

(JENNA is at a loss for what to say.)

SUZANNE

Before tonight, of course.

JENNA

... Mrs. Hatterson ...

SUZANNE

Whatever's happened in the past between you two: might be best not mention it.

JENNA

...There is nothing to tell.

SUZANNE

Good. We'll just leave it at that.

(JACOB RITTER and CYNTHIA LEWIS enter from the wings. JACOB, is a stagehand in his mid-thirties and CYNTHIA a young actress, barely old enough to be holding down a job. Their attraction to each other is warily apparent although they themselves are acutely unaware the rest of the world can see through their lackluster efforts of keeping their affair a secret.)

JACOB

How in the love of God do you get out of this place?

SUZANNE

[Excuse me?] Are you addressing us?

CYNTHIA

Mrs. Hatterson. Miss LaFleur.

JACOB

[Are] all the exits blocked?

FRANK

(Entering after them, FRANK, an actor, forty-fifty )

Kicked you two out of the costume room finally, did they?

(JACOB says nothing; but clearly looks to FRANK, noting his own arrival at their heels. There is an awkward silence.)

CYNTHIA

Mr. Ritter was kind enough to wake me.

JACOB

Is there a way—

SUZANNE

There is no passage out, my dears. They've bolted us in for the night.

JACOB

(Moves out to the edge of the stage.)

Not a chance of it.

FRANK

I knew I shoulda called on that last hand.

SUZANNE

For our own good, I'm afraid. It would seem we are a threat to the nation.

JENNA

Please, be still.

CYNTHIA

I ... have to go home. My parents ...

SUZANNE

I'm afraid your parents will have to wait, my dear.

(JACOB hops off stage into the audience and heads toward the lobby.)

SUZANNE

It won't do you any good, sir.

JENNA

We've already asked.

(But JACOB ignores them and pulls open the door only to be blocked by CAPTAIN DONNESSEY.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Back in, Sir.

JACOB

(Attempting instead to move past him:)

Step aside, please.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Stand down.

JACOB

I'm going home.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Not on my watch.

JACOB

I'm not asking.

(And with that JACOB is marched back into the theatre at rifle point by CAPTAIN DONNESSEY.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

(Hollering back to the lobby:)

I've got this.

(To the group inside:)

Is this everyone?

FRANK

... There are two more men upstairs. We were ... [in the middle of a card game.]

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Get them down here. Stay away from windows. I advise you stay together in here.

JENNA

What's happening out there?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

[Nothing to be concerned with]: a few gathering ... Civilians . . Soldiers—nothing to be— ... Has everyone here made your statements?

JACOB

[State—?: Yeah], I'll make a statement. It was John Wilkes Booth. I saw him—now can I go home?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

My orders are to keep you here.

FRANK

You said the plan was to escort us across the street for questioning then let us go.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Plans change.

We don't need another incident.

FRANK

Incident?

CYNTHIA

Did something happen—someone get hurt?

SUZANNE

Other than the President, of course?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

And they're being attended to. For the time being I suggest you all stay here: in this room.

FRANK

That your polite way of saying that's an order? ...—I'll go get [the others] ...

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

You do that.

(To JACOB as FRANK exits:)

You don't want to push your way out there, sir. It isn't safe.

JACOB

I've done nothing wrong. / We've—

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Then let's just keep it that way. Agreed?

(He backs himself out into the lobby.)

(Pause. JACOB, from the aisle, stares out at the group onstage, who in turn stare back.)

SUZANNE

You're outnumbered.

JACOB

"Bully."

CYNTHIA

(Offering him to sit next to her on some of the strewn furniture as JACOB travels back down the aisle to the stage.)

Jake—Mr. Ritter.

JENNA

Oh, now, there's no need for pretense.

SUZANNE

Ohhh but there is: Keeping up appearances is the first step to correcting behavior.

(JACOB chooses not to respond. He reaches the stage's apron and hops up onto stage without using the stairs. He looks around, choosing for the moment not to sit at all.)

SUZANNE

Could you procure a broom?

JACOB

I'm on my own time now, Mrs. Happerson, not the company's.

SUZANNE

Hatterson.

JACOB

That's what I said.

SUZANNE

Then your P's should be pronounced "tuh".

(A beat.)

JACOB

I'll find a broom.

SUZANNE

(To Cynthia:)

How old are you?

Old enough to know better. He's not even an actor. He's a stagehand.

CYNTHIA

I'm afraid I don't [have the faintest idea] what you're talking about.

SUZANNE

Appearances, honey. I'm talking about your reputation.

(As JACOB returns with a broom.)

Over there: the broken glass.

(Pause: the women say nothing as JACOB sweeps up what debris he finds. FRANK, PETER and MARTIN enter from the wings. PETER, is an actor in his late twenties/mid-thirties. MARTIN a character actor in his fifties. MARTIN is a shade, what shall we say, effeminate, but not what we would call "out of the closet"—if in fact he is gay. As opposed to our previously entered couple [Jacob & Cynthia] there is absolutely no chemistry between the two men. They each play for different teams as it were.)



CYNTHIA

My father's going to be worried sick.

MARTIN

What's this about none of us going home?

JACOB

If you can you believe it.<sup>1</sup>

MARTIN

Then it's true?

SUZANNE

He's still alive, thank you very much. Am I the only one interested in what actually happened here tonight?

MARTIN

Where's Mr. Maddox?

SUZANNE

Who?

MARTIN

The ... stage manager.

FRANK

Gone.

MARTIN

I have a wife and children, if you please?

FRANK

We know. We all know.

SUZANNE

Nobody else cares about history?

MARTIN

(Continuing his conversation with Frank:)

My apologies you have no one but I do and need to get to them.

FRANK

Why? Are you paying them by the hour?

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<sup>1</sup> A twisting remark; beginning out "If you can believe it" and turning on the word 'can' into "can you believe it?"

MARTIN

I happen to care about my family, thank you very much, and I'm worried for their well-being.

JENNA

Then you should have left along with the others. We all / should ha—

MARTIN

Forgive me if I was packing my belongings. Lord knows when they'll ever let anyone back in here again.

JACOB

No looting. No souvenirs.

(MARTIN eyes Cynthia in response to the same thought:  
*"who's taking souvenirs?"*—meaning Cynthia herself.)

FRANK

(To Martin:)

You were playing cards along with the rest of us.

PETER

Where is Mr. Maddox? And that boy, Peanut? and Sprang, I think his name was.

JACOB

Sprang was with you?

JENNA

You were all playing cards?

FRANK

You need five for a good table. Six to keep it interesting.

SUZANNE

They didn't come back, I'm afraid.

PETER

Why not? Did they / let 'em—

JACOB

They let him go?

JENNA

They aren't saying.

SUZANNE

They must've been involved in the *incident* the Soldier was talking about.

JACOB

Ahh.

MARTIN

Incident?

SUZANNE

Someone was presumably hurt. They're not saying who they're not saying what.

PETER

Peanut was kicked in the head when Wilkes jumped his horse getting away. Took it hard.

JENNA

So, you saw it; you saw it was Booth.

PETER

I ... didn't see anything. It's what I heard. Peanut was holding Booth's horse at the backstage door there. He said Wilkes grabbed the reins and kicked him away without so much as a word.

CYNTHIA

Then that must be it. They were talking about Mr. Peanut.

JACOB

Peanut's just what he's called. He's not a "mister"; he's just a kid.

FRANK

No, I imagine the bluecoat was talking about something else. Peanut was playing cards with us up in the dressing room; he held a hand fine. Played better than ...  
(Indicates Martin)

JENNA

Never the less, it seems the men were taken across for questioning—Something happened and ... here we are.

MARTIN

For how long?

JENNA

(Shrugs.)

I just wanted to get out of my costume.

CYNTHIA

Me too. Then I fell asleep.

JENNA

Oh, [we know what you two were up to.]

JACOB

Hey.

PETER

We're all just going to have to wait it out, never mind who was doing what.

FRANK

Which brings to mind:

(Pulls a deck of playing cards out of his pocket:)

Cards anyone?

MARTIN

Sorry: you've already alleviated me of all my money. So now you have me trapped and penniless. Thank you, thank you.

PETER

They take anyone else across the street?

MARTIN

I can't do this. I've got to go home. I have to go home.

SUZANNE

Everyone else left when the pandemonium started. I would have been trampled through that sea of people. The orchestra high tailed it when they carried out the President. Miss Keene, [herself], escorted the first lady to where they took her husband.

I watch [that's what I do. Miss Keene is a] selfless woman.

JENNA

Yes, we know. We were all dutifully impressed by Laura Keene's self-importance.

SUZANNE

You would do better to treat her with a little respect; a woman in her / position—

JENNA

[Is] from old British money. Yes, we know.

(SUZANNE chooses not to reply. Pause.)

CYNTHIA  
So we just wait?

JENNA  
Nothing much else [we can do.]

CYNTHIA  
Excellent.

(MARTIN starts offstage.)

SUZANNE  
He wants us all to stay here. Onstage.

MARTIN  
He?

JENNA  
The Soldiers.

SUZANNE  
The Captain.

JACOB  
[He] pulled a gun on me.

MARTIN  
Well then by all means  
(Returning onstage looking for a place to sit.)  
we wouldn't want you to get shot.

JACOB  
[ha-ha.]

PETER  
How long'd he say we'd be here?

JENNA  
He didn't.

MARTIN  
What time is it, anyone?

FRANK  
You don't know?

MARTIN

Do you?

FRANK

"I've got to go home, I've got to go home": and you don't even know what time it is?

MARTIN

I have a watch, thank you, I just wanted to know if it's accurate.

FRANK

[And here] you said you no money [and yet] you have a watch.

MARTIN

He cheats at cards.

FRANK

Aww, for god/sake—

PETER

It was a fair hand. I dealt him the queen myself.

MARTIN

There were three others on the table.

FRANK

Don't siddown if you can't pay out.

JENNA

Are you men serious?

FRANK

What?

JENNA

Look at what [happened here tonight]: Lincoln was shot: point blank in the back of the head—; you could all be at war again, we're trapped inside here under armed guard, and who knows what happened to Mr. Maddox, Peanut and Mr. Sprang and and and you're arguing about a game of cards?

(Slight pause ... )

FRANK

... And?

And? PETER

Cards are a serious business. FRANK

It should be. MARTIN

It's a gentleman's game. FRANK

It should be. MARTIN

And a game of skill. FRANK

Like I said— MARTIN

I'll play. CYNTHIA

It's a gentleman's game. FRANK

It shou-- MARTIN

You say, "it should be" one more time and I'll force this deck of cards right / up your— FRANK

[Hey.] There are ladies present. PETER

You're [right]—He's right. JACOB

My apologies, ladies. PETER

Granted. SUZANNE

FRANK

Thanks, Queeny.

CYNTHIA

Why can't I play?

MARTIN

They would be taking unfair advantage of you, my dear.

(JENNA smiles knowingly. JACOB avoids her glance.)

CYNTHIA

I saw that.

JENNA

Did you now?

MARTIN

This is a travesty—

PETER

Alright; enough: it looks like we could be here a while, / we don't to need—

JACOB

So, we don't need to be on each other's ...  
(Looks to Peter:)

PETER

At each other's backs.

(Slight pause.)

FRANK

The man is right. Get a table.

MARTIN

Oh, my god, man.

SUZANNE

Might as well make yourself comfortable, ladies: the gentlemen have spoken.

(A table is procured and chairs set in place by Frank, Peter and Cynthia.)



CYNTHIA

(Stating her case for playing:)

You need five.

FRANK

You need money.

(CAPTAIN DONNESSEY re-enters again from the lobby.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Everybody here?

FRANK

Hello again, sir. Would / there be—

MARTIN

I need to get home to my / wife and children—

CYNTHIA

My / parents—

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Do any of you know of Secretary Seward?

(A slight beat.)

MARTIN

In what way?

JENNA

State Secretary Seward? He had a carriage accident couple weeks ago, didn't he?

PETER

Has it been that long?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

What else can you tell me about him?

JACOB

... "He lost the party election to Lincoln"?

MARTIN

That was six years ago.

(There is a slightly awkward silence.)

FRANK

If we guess right do we get a cigar?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

He was attacked and almost killed in his home this evening.  
Same time as Mr. Lincoln was attacked here, as close as we can tell.

(Another silence.)

FRANK

Was he at Grover's Theatre?

PETER

Frank.

FRANK

Sorry: The whiskey talking.

JENNA

And the Vice President?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

What do you know about him?

JENNA

Nothing. Nothing / at all.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

What can you tell me [about him]?

FRANK

Why?: Did you lose him?

JACOB - MARTIN - JENNA

Frank.

(No reply. There is a pause. )

SUZANNE

How is the President fairing?

(CAPTAIN DONNESSEY doesn't respond.)

PETER

There were three other men with us earlier. And I think a woman before that; they were taken across the street for questioning, can you tell us what happened to them?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Nothing to be concerned with.

CYNTHIA

They're our friends.

(No response.)

JENNA

The mob outside? "Civilians" "Soldiers"? That why we're not being walked across the street for our statements?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

We'll get your statements later. We know where you are. Your friends'll be fine. Their wounds are being seen to.

JENNA

Wha—what happened to them?

JACOB

So, it's safe to say, they won't be coming / back?

PETER

Are we / going to be--

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

No one's going anywhere.

FRANK

Could we get something to eat, then? Some cheese maybe?

CYNTHIA

Could you get word to my parents?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

No one has anything else to report?

MARTIN

To report?: no. But if you would get word to our families.

(CAPTAIN DONNESSEY opens the lobby door and exits back inside.)

SUZANNE

(As he goes:)

We'll be here.

FRANK

I don't think he's telling us everything.

JENNA

How much have you had to drink?

FRANK

Tonight?

MARTIN

This is wrong.

CYNTHIA

They're treating us like we had some[thing to do with this.]

FRANK

You got that feeling, did you?

PETER

We didn't.

JACOB

I know we didn't.

JENNA

Anybody who did: ran—would of run--should have run.

JACOB

They did run. Booth did it: everybody knows Booth did it.

SUZANNE

Did you see him?

JACOB

Damned right I saw him. Saw him run across the stage. Said somethin', woulda stopped him too, if Sprang hadn't thrown me back.

SUZANNE

Sprang?

JACOB

Ned Sprang.

MARTIN

[He's] another stagehand. We were all playing cards earlier. A little older than ...

JACOB

Jacob—

CYNTHIA

Jake. Jake Ritter.

MARTIN

Older than Mister Ritter, here. Stocky fellow. A bit of a scruff.

PETER

Smells like fish.

JACOB

That's him.

PETER

I heard Wilkes had a knife.

CYNTHIA

Cut up Mr. Whithers when he ran by him.

SUZANNE

Who?

CYNTHIA

[The] orchestra conductor. Caught him in the ...  
(Indicates the side of his vest)

SUZANNE

Did all the musicians manage to get free?

PETER

My point is maybe he was trying to keep you from getting hurt yourself.

JACOB

Who?

PETER

Sprang.

JENNA

He may have saved your life.

JACOB

You don't know Sprang.

CYNTHIA

Is he evil?

JACOB

Lazy. As they get. Been a stagehand here for going on ten years.

MARTIN

Aren't you a stagehand here?

JACOB

[For] two months. [I've] no plans on staying a stage/hand.

PETER

There are worse professions.

JENNA

There's been a war on. Jobs are scarce.

JACOB

Not that scarce.

SUZANNE

Well, I imagine we should all be out of jobs tomorrow; [you can] bet your last farthing on that.

(FRANK runs his thumb across the edge of the deck of cards.)

SUZANNE

Play your game, boys. We're going to be here awhile.

FRANK

(To JACOB; referring to Martin; then Cynthia:)

I'll front him. You front her.

(To Cynthia as they sit:)

You know how to play?

CYNTHIA

Just deal the cards.

FRANK

Martin, siddown.

I'm not gonna give you your money back; you're gonna have to earn it.

(Puts money on the table:)

That's a loan. Show me your watch.

MARTIN

I'm not selling you my / watch.

FRANK

Earn it back then.

(JENNA watches as the game begins. SUZANNE sits quietly on her sofa. )

JENNA

How ... are you so calm?

SUZANNE

History, my dear.

JENNA

(More repeating the word than anything else.)

History.

SUZANNE

Think about it: this is . . History. For the first time in my life—probably in any of our lives—we are part of history here. Not playing a character in some historical play; not reading about it, not even witnessing it: we ARE history. Soak it in, my dear. These moments pass.

For the rest of our lives people will be asking where were you when Mr. Lincoln was shot. How many of us will be able to say, "I was there"? "On stage"?

FRANK

Every two bit actor from here to Oregon.

MARTIN

(Pulling a stack of flyers from a coat pocket.)

That's why I got me some playbills.

FRANK

Good idea.

MARTIN

Got 'em all.

(FRANK just looks to him:)

MARTIN

Nickel a piece.

FRANK

Done.

(Slides him fifty cents or more. Takes half the stack.)

PETER

Shoulda held out for ten.

FRANK

I woulda paid it; it's his own money.

MARTIN

(To Peter:)

Had to sell mine b'fore you sold him yours.

PETER

I woulda held out for fifteen.

(There is a loud crash in the lobby followed by a cheer from the crowd outside. The sounds of the crowds increase as CAPTAIN DONNESSEY swings open the door just enough to address the group onstage:)

CAPTAIN

[We've got] everything under control. Just ... Stay where you are.

(The door closes again, muffling the noise of the crowd. SUZANNE takes this all in quietly as the game tries to continue under way. JENNA looks out to the closed lobby door.)

(Lights fade.)



SCENE 2

(At rise:

SUZANNE has fallen asleep on the sofa. JENNA drapes a coat over her as JACOB , PETER and MARTIN rise from the poker table to stretch their legs while CYNTHIA and FRANK remain seated. CYNTHIA studies the deck of cards as FRANK finishes counting out his winnings.)

PETER

Don't [bother pocketin' your money now.] We're just getting started.

JACOB

I'm not [lickin' my wounds yet.]

FRANK

All I know is somebody owes me fourteen dollars and ... thirty-six cents.

JENNA

[Shhhh.]

(Pointing Suzanne out:)

"She's sleeping."

FRANK

Thank the Lord.

SUZANNE

(Not moving;)

I'm only resting my eyes.

FRANK

As long as you keep resting your mouth at the same time, I'm a happy man.

SUZANNE

You are a crude and vulgar specimen.

MARTIN

You have that right.

FRANK

Guess I placed my boot right into that one.

Well, don't everyone come to my rescue at once. Anybody have anything to drink?

PETER

If we had I'm sure you'd have emptied it by now.

FRANK

Good point.

(No reply. Again to Peter:)

So, where do you think they're hiding it?

SUZANNE

Once a lush / always a—

FRANK

Hey, sister I liked it better when you were sleeping.

SUZANNE

I wasn't sleeping.

FRANK

Yeah, well, whatever you were doing: I liked that better.

JACOB

(To Cynthia:)

You trying to will yourself a decent hand?

CYNTHIA

[I'm] trying to figure out how he marked them.

MARTIN

If you succeed I'll cover double your losses.

FRANK

The key to winning is simple. Play with lesser card players. Works every time.

PETER

(To Jenna:)

Staring out at that door isn't going to make it open any faster.

JENNA

It's not as if I'm losing out on the greatest intellectual conversation of the ages.

FRANK

'Could be as good as it gets, girlie.

JENNA

Don't refer to me in that tone.

FRANK

What tone?

JENNA

That lecherous old man looking down the top of my corset tone.

FRANK

You're wearing a corset?  
I didn't know. Usually they stick out—

JENNA

Oh, my word.

FRANK

The *ribs* on the corset. I wasn't talking about her—

SUZANNE

Somebody shut him up.

FRANK

Although I have nothing against—

MARTIN

Frank, if you shut up I'll find you a bottle.

FRANK

I knew someone was holding out on me.

MARTIN

{I} said I'd look for one not I know where one is.

FRANK

You said 'find'.

MARTIN

Which implies *expected* success—/—doesn't guarantee it.

FRANK

Well, start looking then.

CYNTHIA

Is that a pen marking?

PETER

(Courtingly to Jenna:)

What would you want to talk about?

JENNA

Sir?

PETER

What?

JENNA

Shouldn't you be fawning over little miss firecracker over there?

PETER

You said you didn't like the conversation; I was only asking what you would prefer to talk about?

CYNTHIA

We can take turns.

(Slight pause.)

JENNA

You really don't want to know how that sounded.

CYNTHIA

We can all choose different subjects—write them down and put them in a hat. Or we could play parlor games.

The Alphabet game is very good, it's one of my favorites.

(Slight pause.)

PETER

(To Jenna:)

Please: Pick a subject or we'll forced to play the alphabet game.

(JENNA just smiles.)

FRANK

Starting with 'F': Find me that bottle.

CYNTHIA

Go and get it yourself.

FRANK

Hurry, I'm dying here.  
I'm dying here..

JENNA

... I didn't offer.

SUZANNE

Just ... find it yourself.

MARTIN

Would it kill you to—

FRANK

Baaaaaa! You're out.

PETER

Are you enjoying this? Call me crazy / but if I—

FRANK

You're crazy—

CYNTHIA

Baaaa. Doesn't anybody know how to spell? "Call me" is a 'C'; we're on 'K'—  
K: as in Kangaroo and Kite /and Kettle.

FRANK

You ever see a Kangaroo?

(To Suzanne:)

They got kangaroos /from where you're from, don't they?

MARTIN

Or Killer as in We didn't KILL the President!

Why won't you let us go home!!!!?

SUZANNE

Is he dead? Did he die?

(There is a crash of glass far offstage. CYNTHIA jumps.)

JACOB

I'll go.

FRANK

Martin, did you find it yet?

MARTIN

[I haven't even left the room.]

(Meanwhile JACOB, followed by PETER exit into the  
right wings.)

CYNTHIA

Is someone there?

FRANK

I don't know.

(Staying put, yelling out:)

IS SOMEONE THERE?

(There is another crash. Followed by yet another.)

JENNA

What is going on / out there?

CYNTHIA

Are they attacking?

SUZANNE

More than likely.

FRANK

Depends on who you consider  
“they”.

JACOB

(Entering with Peter:)

Someone's throwing rocks at the windows.

CYNTHIA

Who?

JENNA

What?

CYNTHIA

Why?

SUZANNE

Because they know someone's in here.

MARTIN

We're in here.

SUZANNE

Exactly.

MARTIN

We didn't do anything.

SUZANNE

We are guilty, sir. By association.  
We're actors. Wilkes is an actor.

JACOB

I'm not an actor.

SUZANNE

Ergo: we are all guilty because we are here.

JENNA

Do you think this is happening all over the city or just [here]?

FRANK

You know something we don't?

SUZANNE

Why would I ... ?.

FRANK

[I] just think maybe you know something you're not telling us.

SUZANNE

About . . what? You're war? It's not mine. We gave up the colonies before any of us were born. Before your country was even weaned. So now you act like spoiled children fighting with each other over your toys; don't look to me for your problems.

CYNTHIA

My brother gave his life in this [war].

MARTIN

[I've] lost two family members and no telling how many friends.

PETER

We've all lost / people.

SUZANNE

Don't get your breeches in a bunch, I was only saying this is your war not mine.

MARTIN

Yeah but you'll suck on the teat for our wages, won't you?

SUZANNE

You are a vul—

(Realizing:)

Oh, new man; same class.

(There is another series of crashes.)

JACOB

That's going to cost a week's payroll to replace all those.

SUZANNE

Maybe you could purchase some of Matthew Brady's stenographs. I hear he sells them to greenhouses after he's done with them.

PETER

(At lobby door:)

They locked it.

SUZANNE

Of course, they locked it.

(PETER pounds on the door. More crashes offstage.)

JACOB

Holy mother / of—

SUZANNE

If you please.

CYNTHIA

What if they're already in here? / What if—?

PETER

Hello!!?

Hello!?? Hey!!!

Hey!!

JACOB

I've got you ... covered.

(CAPTAIN DONNESSEY opens the door.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Stop.

PETER

They're breaking out the windows back here.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

... We'll send someone out [there].

PETER

Is? Is this happening everywhere or just here?

FRANK

Speak up, we can't hear you!

(A beat; for dramatic purposes only:)

Use your stage voice.



PETER

What is happening out there?

(No reply.)

MARTIN

Well?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

We have ... everything ... is under control. [The] problem is isolated right now. We'll look into the back of the building.

(Acknowledging the women:)

Ladies.

(He exits back again into the lobby. There is a shared silence as PETER makes his way back down the aisle to the stage.)

JENNA

He means us.

JACOB

Of course, he means us.

SUZANNE

He means you: gentlemen. We 'ladies' are simply caught up in the fray.

JACOB

I had nothing to do with this.

MARTIN

How do they know that: You showed up—when? a month ago? Where were you before then?

JACOB

Sprang. [He's] been here ten years. [He] knows Wilkes Booth on a first name basis.

FRANK

Half of us know Wilkes on a first name basis. Are you saying we're all his accomplices in this?

JACOB

Are you?

PETER

This is going to do anyone any good.

MARTIN

(To Peter:)

You've only been here a few months yourself.

JACOB

And where 'd you come from?

PETER

... Boston.

JACOB

[That so? I] hear tell they've got a real rebel stronghold underground in Boston.

PETER

The war is over.

JACOB

Is it?

PETER

If you didn't hear: Lee surrendered to Grant last / week.

MARTIN

Anybody bother to tell that to Wilkes Booth?

SUZANNE

Gentlemen, gentlemen—

(There is another crash followed by a slamming door.)

CYNTHIA

I don't like this. Is there / someone—

JACOB

Shhhh!

(The men pick up various items as sticks, broken glass, etc. MARTIN picks up the broom used by Jacob earlier.

Anything lying about is picked up to be used as a weapon.

JENNA and CYNTHIA follow suit. Only SUZANNE allows herself to remain weaponless; relying on the others to keep her from harm. The troupe begin to flank the edges of the stage, the wings etc. The silence grows as they take their stand; SUZANNE positioning herself center stage,

bordered by all. Pause. FRANK looking to Martin, who brandishes the broom, does his best to stifle a laugh.)

PETER

What?

FRANK

Martin? Whatcha gonna do? Sweep him to death?

MARTIN

(Holding on dearly:)

Shut up.

CYNTHIA

(Pointing out the Presidential box:)

There! Up there!!

PETER

What?

JENNA

No.

(They are all staring up at the box now.)

JACOB

What? Wha'd you see?

JENNA

Nothing.

PETER

Is there someone up there?

(Behind them, from the right wings, NED SPRANG enters. NED is a stagehand in his late thirties, unkempt and brandishing a broken chair leg. He stops, relieved when he sees the group, though he is still unseen by them. )

NED

(Loosening his grip on the chair leg:)

Oh, thank God.

(All jump. They turn around in reaction with a mixture of reactions. CYNTHIA lets out a startled shriek while the others add a bit more vocabulary to their responses:)

MARTIN  
Jesus, Mary and Jose—

FRANK  
God almighty—

JENNA  
Who are—? Who is—?

JACOB  
Sprang!?

SUZANNE  
Mister . . ?

(NED now relifts the chair leg in self defense.)

JACOB  
(Still holding firm:)  
Sprang. Ned Sprang.

NED  
What you all still doing here?

MARTIN  
(Unsure what to do with the broom:)  
What are *we* doing here?: What are *you* doing here?

NED  
I I sleep here.

SUZANNE  
Sleep?

NED  
In the costume room. I got a cot set up there.

(JACOB and CYNTHIA try not to share a look. Pause.  
NED does not advance; he seems no imminent threat.  
JENNA is the first to lower her guard, followed by  
CYNTHIA. Yet they still keep their distance with the men  
between themselves and Sprang.)

NED  
Can I ... uh ... Can we put down the [weapons]?

JACOB  
... Can we ... ?

(There is a standoff. PETER watches as CYNTHIA moves  
further away from the men. )

JENNA

Well?

(No response. PETER is the first of the men to lower his weapon of choice, followed by MARTIN and then FRANK. JACOB alone remains poised for NED's possible attack.)

SUZANNE

Boys. Boys. We don't really need to do this now, do we?

NED

I'll ... yes, [ma]'am.

(To Jacob:)

I don't mean to hurt no one ... [But] I figure someone's trying to break in. They been smashin' windows.

MARTIN

Did you see anyone?

NED

No. You?

(There is a pause as attention turns to CYNTHIA.)

CYNTHIA

I saw someone up there.

SUZANNE

Are you sure?

CYNTHIA

(No she's not:)

... I want to say yes ...

(Pause.)

NED

Can we put these things down then? I'm gonna just ...

(NED tries to set down the chair leg but JACOB does not lower the piece of broken glass therefore NED doesn't let go of the chair leg either.)

PETER

Uh ... let me ...

(PETER moves in between the two men and quietly takes Ned's chair leg then crossing to Jacob, he offers to take his weapon (broken glass) as well. There is a slight pause. JACOB relinquishes the item. )

SUZANNE

You two gentlemen know each other.

JACOB

This is ... who I told you about earlier.

JENNA

The ... who?

JACOB

Stopped me from catching Booth.

NED

(Perplexed:)

...What?

PETER

The man who kept you from being knifed by Booth?

JENNA

Nobody knows whether / it was--

JACOB

It was Booth.

(To Ned:)

You clapped me in the mouth.

(NED is at a loss for words.)

JENNA

A man rushes by you with a knife and he pulled you back?

JACOB

He hit me in the mouth.

PETER

It was a confusing moment for all of us here.

JACOB

(To Ned:)

“Don’t tell which way he went.” You said, "Don't tell which way he went."

NED

... I don't know what I said.

JACOB

He hit me!

NED

I don't know what [I did.] Maybe. The man was running—

JACOB

Booth. It was Wilkes Booth AND YOU KNOW IT.

NED

I just I saw a knife.

(Slight pause.)

JACOB

You honestly believe this man?

SUZANNE

Why shouldn't we? He's been here for ten years; you've been here for how long?:  
Two months?

(A beat. JACOB is now the one at a loss for words. He considers his options in continuing his argument—then faces the futility of the moment:)

JACOB

(At last ... turning to Cynthia:)

Tell 'em.

CYNTHIA

... I just want to go home.

(Slight pause.)

JACOB

Well ... good luck on that.

(Pause. As the group starts to relax with each other JACOB watches NED stealing glimpses of Cynthia.)

JACOB

What're you lookin' at?

NED

[Nuthin'.]

MARTIN

I believe you owe the man an apology. He very likely saved / your life.

JACOB

Stop. Just stop.

(Slight pause between the men:)

JENNA

(To Cynthia:)

What is it you think you saw?

JACOB

How much'd you see up there  
in the costume room?

PETER

(to Jacob:)

Let him alone.

NED

... I wasn't in the costume room –I was  
... upstairs. I was up in props. There's  
some ... I got some ...

CYNTHIA

I don't know. A shadow.

FRANK

Any hooch up there??

SUZANNE

Was it ...

NED

No. Sorry.

MARTIN

A ghost?

JENNA

Please: Be serious.

MARTIN

I am. "There are more things in and Heaven and earth, Horatio."

PETER

Could be another looter.

JACOB

(Indicating the officers in the lobby:)

Or one of them.

SUZANNE

(To Ned:)

I'm sure we're being kept under surveillance. If you .. uh ...

NED

... For what?



JACOB

As if you don't already know.

MARTIN

(Hollering up at the boxes:)

Hey!! Is anybody up there?

(No reply.)

FRANK

Unbelievable that nobody answered.

JACOB

Get me a ladder.

MARTIN

You're the stagehand.

I mean you know where they are.

JENNA

Why don't you just go around?

PETER

It's locked. They're all locked.

JACOB

(Starting offstage.)

You have to go through the lobby to go around.

MARTIN

There's another passage [that] runs below the stage. They lock that?

CYNTHIA

Under the stage?

PETER

It empties into the lobby: Where the soldiers are.

But it's where the Soldiers are.

MARTIN

Good point.

FRANK

I thought it just ran from one side of the stage to other, so actors can cross when the back's all the way open.

MARTIN

It also runs out to the lobby.

FRANK

Whaddo you know: you actually know something.

PETER

It just goes up front: it won't get you to the box without going through the [lobby].

FRANK

And and what's your point?

PETER

I don't have one. You?  
You really don't need another drink.

JACOB

(Re-entering with a ladder:)

If you ladies are done.

SUZANNE

I don't think we should go up there.

NED

In the office.

JACOB

I've already got a ladder.

NED

The Ford's office.

House Manager's office: he keep his booze in there. Wife won't let him drink at home.

FRANK

Mr. Sprang, my man, you have a friend.

JACOB

We ain't breakin' into nobody's office.

FRANK

Climb your ladder, boy.

(To Ned:)

Lead the way.

(NED heads offstage followed by FRANK. MARTIN and PETER watch them go.)

JENNA

Go on. It's not as if we've anything better to do.

(MARTIN pauses a moment then indeed follows after Ned and Frank.)

SUZANNE

Does anybody have the time?

(JENNA and CYNTHIA look to PETER who only shrugs.)

JENNA

Our watch just walked out.

CYNTHIA

How long've we been here?

SUZANNE

Not long enough.

(To Peter:)

You've been with this Theatre how long? Six months?

PETER

Four . . . and a half.

SUZANNE

Where you settle from?

JACOB

Someone going to hold this for me?

PETER

(Moving along with Cynthia to assist Jacob:)

Around. Bit of a nomad—or a 'Vagabond' I guess you'd call me.

JACOB

You a rebel lover Daniels?

PETER

Why do you keep ... ?

JACOB

Thought I heard a twang in your voice.

PETER

Sorry: I'm not the reason we're in here.  
Where do you hail?

JACOB

Connecticut; born and bred. Got a ear for voices.

PETER

Well, I been a bit of everywhere so ...  
(To Jenna:)  
Where do *you* call home?

JACOB

(Climbing:)

She's from Texas--Court her on your own time.

SUZANNE

Kettle meet Pot.

CYNTHIA

Wait.

(She reaches up to give him the broken chair leg Ned had  
been holding earlier.)

Be careful.

JACOB

You hear me? If somebody's up there it's best you present yourself.

CYNTHIA

What if he has a gun?

JACOB

If he has a gun he woulda showed himself long time ago.

JENNA

(To Peter:)

I heard you have a wife and son.

PETER

Who told you that?

JACOB

Hey!! He's holding the ladder; this is not the best time / to rattle his cage.

MARTIN

(Rushing back in:)

Somebody got a hammer? Or a screwdriver?

(But before anyone can answer: we hear a thud and a crash. The group onstage start to react--)

FRANK (offstage)

Never mind.

MARTIN

Never mind.

(He heads offstage again.)

(JACOB pauses a moment before revealing himself at the top of the railing.)

JACOB

Last chance.

(And he's up. He looks over and around inside.)

Nuthin'. Just a draft.

(JACOB grabs hold of the railing to pull himself over. It breaks and half of it falls to the stage.)

SUZANNE

My lord, we'll be destroyed from the inside before the outside ever gets to us.

JACOB

(Decides not to go into the box:)

OK, well there's ... no one .. there.

PETER

Prob'ly just a shadow.

JACOB

Whatever it was: it's gone.  
Hold on Nellie.

CYNTHIA

You see something?

JACOB

There's a hole. I can see a shaft of light coming in from somewhere.

JENNA

There's your ghost.

JACOB

Somebody ...

(Checks the railing again, doesn't trust it.)

Looks like somebody whittled a hole in the door to box seven.

PETER

So?

JACOB

That's a solid door.

CYNTHIA

Come down before you get hurt.

JACOB

Yeah ...

(Starting down the ladder.)

That hole wan't there this afternoon.

SUZANNE

So, you're saying?

JACOB

So, I'm saying, "that hole wasn't there this afternoon."

SUZANNE

How marvelously cryptic of you.

PETER

Maybe the ghost did it.

JACOB

Somebody did.

(Pause. The silence on stage is suspended as a noise has begun outside [from the lobby].)

JENNA

What is that?

Do you hear that?

PETER

I hear it.

(But the sound is undistinguishable. Voices. Many voices. JACOB finishes climbing down from the ladder. They all strain to listen. MARTIN and FRANK emerge with several bottles of liquor in tow.)

FRANK

We hit the mother lode.

JENNA - SUZANNE - PETER

Shhhhhhh.

FRANK

What? What is it?

(The lobby doors open, CAPTAIN DONNESSEY addresses the group. Behind him the voices from outside are now clearer.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

(Over the chanting:)

Everybody stays where they are.

(Notices the ladder:)

What are you doing?

JACOB

Cleaning up.

FRANK

Housekeeping.

(The chant is clear: "BURN IT DOWN! BURN IT DOWN! BURN IT DOWN! BURN IT DOWN! ... " There is another crash in the lobby. CAPTAIN DONNESSEY turns to the crash.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Nobody leaves this room.

FRANK

Stage. It's called a stage.

JACOB

Shut up, Frank.

MARTIN

...Yeah, shut up, Frank.

(But CAPTAIN DONNESSEY is gone again. The chant is remuffled by the closed door but now, knowing what it is and perhaps a few more voices have added in, the chant continues on. Slight pause. NED enters from the wings unseen, carrying a corkscrew, glasses and another bottle. He is stopped by the stillness of the rest.)

NED

I found some glasses for the ladies ...

(There is no reply other than the chanting from outside:

"BURN IT DOWN!!

BURN IT DOWN!!

BURN IT DOWN!!

BURN IT DOWN!!

BURN IT DOWN!! ... ”)

END ACT I



ACT II

(In the darkness the chanting picks up again.  
"BURN IT DOWN!! BURN IT DOWN! BURN IT  
DOWN ...")

As the lights come up we find the setting is the  
same as we left; only the positions have changed.  
Two or more bottles have been emptied while most  
of the rest have been uncorked. We have opened  
upon a silence among the group onstage, filled only  
by the voices from outside. Each of the group  
reflecting a moment on the news they've just  
received. Pause.)

MARTIN

... You're .. what?

SUZANNE

Oh, my ...

JENNA

Really?

SUZANNE

Ohhhh, my, my, my, my, my ...

FRANK

(Catches himself and stops himself from laughing.)

[Sorry.]

JACOB

... I didn't know.

MARTIN

(Taking the glass away from Cynthia:)

No more for you, I'm afraid.

SUZANNE

How many drinks have you already had?

JACOB

I really didn't ... I had no idea.

CYNTHIA

It didn't concern / you—

JACOB

Well, it does now. It would of then—believe me ... I [didn't—] ...

FRANK

How old did you think she was?

CYNTHIA

I'm right here.

JACOB

Twenty. Twenty-two.

JENNA

Oh, in what light?

JACOB

... Not sixteen.

MARTIN

The girl is still living with her parents.

PETER

That doesn't necessarily mean anything.

(Pause.)

JACOB

Oh . . my god.

CYNTHIA

Nothing has changed ...

JACOB

Oh, my, [god]—

(Deflecting to the chanting outside:)

Will somebody shut them up out there?

PETER

They'll set off home soon.

If they were going to do something they'd have done it by now.

JENNA

(Catches FRANK staring at her:)

[What?]

FRANK

I think I know you from somewhere.

JENNA

Oh, my lord, we're in the company together here.

FRANK

No.

JENNA

How many have *you* had?

FRANK

Stopped counting in sixty-three.

(There is another silence, still filled with the chanting from outside. JACOB stares over at Cynthia then looks away, catching sight now of NED, who says nothing.)

CYNTHIA

You can say what you want [about me] but I never lied to you.

JACOB

(Aside to her:)

You never told me you were sixteen.

CYNTHIA

I don't recall you asking.

JACOB

... Not now.

CYNTHIA

When then?

JACOB

Not now. Not here.

(By means of an explanation:)

You're drunk.

CYNTHIA

Sober enough to remember what / you—

JACOB

Oh, my god.

SUZANNE

Must you continue to use the Lord's name / in vain?

JENNA

Do we really need to go through this parlor comedy right now?

FRANK

I'm being entertained; I don't know about the rest of you—

SUZANNE

A little restraint—

FRANK

—but I'm perfectly happy—

SUZANNE

—might be in order—

FRANK

—at the moment. / Where's that corkscrew?

SUZANNE

—if you please.

PETER

Finish a bottle before you open another.

FRANK

Why should I wait to get to the good stuff? You see, the way, the palate works—  
(Receiving the corkscrew from Ned)

Thank you my good man.

(Starts opening a new bottle.)

—is the tastebuds require the most sensitivity in order to appreciate the finest  
liqueur or spirit or—

(Reads the bottle:)

Champagne 1802. Damn.

(He immediately waves his hand to the women: begging  
their apologies for his language. Then back on course:)

Once the tongue has been numbed, as it were, the tastes of each bouquet are  
essentially lost on each consequential effort. So it stands to reason that we find  
the best and—

(Giving Martin the bottle:)

Hold this.

(Starts to open another bottle.)

—continue to the second best and on until we leave the moonshine for last.

MARTIN

It scares me that he actually makes sense.

SUZANNE

(Taking the bottle from Frank:)

I am not going to just sit around while you ...

FRANK

Go ahead: say it.

SUZANNE

(Choosing her word:)

'Men' drink yourselves to death.

FRANK

It beats being shot by corporal diapers out there.

JENNA

(Crossing over to Martin with her glass.)

I'll have some of that Champagne if you don't mind.

(FRANK looks to Suzanne and smiles as if to say: "I win.")

CYNTHIA

What about me?

MARTIN

Need you even ask.

PETER

(To Martin, Frank or Ned:)

Did Harry Ford have any mixers in his office? Soda water? Ginger Ale?

CYNTHIA

Never mind.

JENNA

This is—Is this how this is supposed to taste?

PETER

(Joining her:)

Something wrong with it?

JENNA

.. I don't know—I like it but I've never ... My grandparents were more the moonshine clan.

PETER

Grandparents?

JENNA

Yes. My parents were caught up in the cholera blight in '42. My sister and I were shuffled off to Harrisburg when I was ...

(To Cynthia:)

Much younger than you.

(Looks to JACOB—then changing the subject:)

From Texas, you are correct, sir.

(JACOB offers a feign smile in return.)

SUZANNE

Mr. Sprang? You haven't said much to anyone here. What exactly is your history with this place?

NED

[I've] got nothing to really say, [ma']am, but thank you all the same.

CYNTHIA

We should play a game?

SUZANNE

What time is it?

FRANK

(While Martin fishes for a pocket watch.)

Time to play a game, obviously.

MARTIN

3:27.

(Pause. And still the silence is filled with the outside chanting. JACOB and CYNTHIA sit estranged, the rest sitting slightly isolated from each other, only JENNA and PETER appear paired together. FRANK glances over at the two of them, followed by MARTIN and then the others looking on to see what is so interesting about PETER and JENNA seated together.)

JENNA

Drink your wine [and mind your own business].

(Heads turn away. Pause. FRANK tries his best to keep to his own thoughts but finds himself drumming to the rhythm of the chant.)

SUZANNE

Would you please?

(FRANK obliges. The silence continues, JACOB joins the others in drink.)

FRANK

(To JENNA, as he absentmindedly begins to drum again.)

I know I know you. Just don't know where.

SUZANNE

Mr. Matthews?

FRANK

(Stops only a moment . . . then begins to smile ... he debates a moment or so more, then starts off to softly sing carrying the chant's beat as his underlying rhythm.)

Ohhhhhhh,  
I wish I was in the land of cotton  
Cinn'mon seed and sandy bottom  
Burn it down  
Burn it down  
Burn it down  
Dixie land

MARTIN

I don't think that is the / wisest move—

FRANK (Continuing:)

(Playing it for all it's worth--threatening always to be louder:)

In Dixie lan'  
Where I was born  
Early on some frosty mornin'  
Look away  
Burn it down  
Burn it down  
Dixie land

Oh, I wish I was in Dixie  
Away!!  
Away!!

SUZANNE

So do we, believe me.

FRANK (Continuing:)

In Dixie land  
We'll take our stand  
To lib and die in Dixie  
Away!  
Away!  
AWAY--

(The lobby door is thrown open as CAPTAIN  
DONNESSEY confronts them:)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Hey! HEY!! What the hell are you doing? Are you trying to get us shot at?

FRANK

Sorry. Could you hear us? I didn't know you could hear us.

MARTIN

You. Just you—Just him.

FRANK

Sorry.  
Lincoln said it was one of his favorites.

JENNA

How is the President's condition?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

(Referring to Ned:)

Who is he?

(There is a silence: no one answers.)

NED

Ned. Nathaniel, Nathaniel Sprang. Most people call me Ned.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Where'd you come from?

NED

(Pointing backstage:)

Upstairs.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

And your business here?



(No reply. NED stands there, a deer in the headlights.)

SUZANNE

He's a stagehand, Captain.

NED

Going on ten years.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Where've you been all this time?

NED

Sleeping.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

When it happened?

(No reply.)

NED

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

(To the rest:)

Anyone else here I don't know about? Yet?

PETER

We we didn't know he was here either ...

SUZANNE

Captain.

PETER

Captain. The window breaking flushed him out.

(Slight pause.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

No more singing.

FRANK

I take requests.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

You don't understand this, do you? This isn't— ... That sound out there? They want someone to pay for this.

SUZANNE

Have they caught Wilkes Booth?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

No, Ma'am. But they know we have you. Do I make myself clear?

MARTIN

Now, see here,/ sir—

JACOB

We have nothing to do with this!

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Right now: no one out there cares.

CYNTHIA

We're tired.

SUZANNE

We're all tired dear.

(To Captain Donnessey:)

She's only a child.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

No more.

(And with that CAPTAIN DONNESSEY exits back into the lobby. Silence but for the chanting outside. JACOB looks to NED, who doesn't return his gaze.)

MARTIN

Tell us again how this is the safest place to be.

CYNTHIA

I'm not a child.

SUZANNE

Be a child, dear, as long as you can. Adulthood only leads to old age.

JENNA

Why did you lie to him, Mr. Sprang?

NED

[I] didn't lie ... I was asleep.

JACOB

On the cot in the costume shop?

NED

Yeah—No ... I was—

JACOB

(Pointing to the wings:)

You were right there—With me—When it happened.

NED

“It”?

JACOB

When the President was shot.

NED

I didn't know that [was what he] ... I didn't know anything about what Wilkes was going to [do], I swear. I I couldn't even swear that it was him. I didn't know that's what he was talking about. I didn't—...

JENNA

What else could he have been talking about?

NED

[I] don't know.

MARTIN

"Don't know", sir, isn't much of a defense.

PETER

Leave him be, he doesn't know anything.

JACOB

Who appointed you his guardian angel?

PETER

He would have run, wouldn't he? Think about it. Everyone from the theatre got out but us. Anybody actually involved in this ... shooting is miles from here.

JACOB

(Attempting to quote Captain Donnessey:)

"Right now: no one out there cares."

PETER

(Taking a slight beat:)

I suggest: no more drinking for anybody. We need to think sober now. We keep our heads about us and everything'll be ... [fine.] Agreed?

FRANK

(Referring to the bottle:)

Right now, this is the only thing keeping me . . . [fine—or whatever word you were referring to] Agreed?

PETER

(To Jacob:)

We've all been through enough.

(Referring quietly to Cynthia:)

A word of advice? Stay young.

JACOB

[What would you know of it?] Keep to yourself.

PETER

I've been down a road or two myself, OK? Where you are. Not all this but—

(Referring to Jacob and Cynthia:)

—you two

(Silence.)

JENNA

You have our attention.

PETER

Just ... Nothing.

JENNA

What?

(There is an awkward silence in the room--as best the silence can be.)

PETER

Another time.

... I have a son, alright? : you heard right.

JENNA

... And a wife?

PETER

Not so much.  
It's a long story.

MARTIN

We have nothing but time.

PETER

Yeah ... Right, well ... Fine. I'm not from .. Boston. But I did worked there. Once. Like everybody here I jus ... where the work is right? [And I] did some work down South—as we all did before the war.

JACOB

I knew you was a reb. Got the /ear.

PETER

.. I originally hail from North Carolina--But that doesn't mean I backed the South in the war. Most none of the theatres—why do you think they closed 'em down? To shut 'em up. People still need to get away—need to escape: 'specially with a war. But the voice. The voice of the artist.

JACOB

[We] don't need your political rhetoric, right / now.

JENNA

Go back to how it is that you 'not so much' have a wife?

PETER

... An age old story and a tale told by an idiot ... Young girl falls in love with an eligible young actor flowing through town. Before long [there comes] news of a child. [But a]fore there's an actual child there's an angry father and a wedding.

SUZANNE

(To Cynthia:)

Are you listening to this?  
This could be / you.

CYNTHIA

I get it "mom".

PETER

The child is born but [it turns out to be] something wrong. [The boy's] feet won't work right. They're not clubbed but ... [it has to do with] something in the muscles. Time goes by: child never learns to walk. [And] then comes the war.

PETER (Continued:)

And “Dad” travels from town to town, doctor to doctor, playhouse to playhouse till all the theatre dries up down South. Then I headed myself north just to find work.

JENNA

Why didn't you just take up a real job?

PETER

What? And give up all this?

FRANK

Here, here.

MARTIN

Shut up, Frank.

PETER

And yet the girl's father, her father, held notion to other plans.

JENNA

What's her name?

PETER

Whose?

JENNA

Your wife.

PETER

Victoria.

(Catches Jenna watching him closely.)

[What?]

JENNA

Say her name again.

PETER

Victoria.

JENNA

(Satisfied with what she's seen:)

[Continue.]

“Her father's plans”:

PETER

And her father's name is Gerald. As is our son's. So Father Gerald decides that the least his son-in-law could do if he wasn't going to support his daughter was to support his cause. So he signs me up for the army. Augusta, Georgia.

JACOB

I told ya.

PETER

And I didn't go. Well, I went but ... with no *intention*. I wrestled with the notion, pacing this planked walk in front of Keenan's Grocery—they had a back room they'd turned into a recruiting office. And I was waited to be picked up . . . or leave . . . a traitor. And isn't a traitor to the wrong cause a patriot? And all these thoughts and lines run through your mind. If someone could script this. And then

...

Then I ... I crossed paths with this kid, must've been all of fourteen—fifteen at best: eager. Believes in *his* Daddy's cause, believes in Davis, buys into the whole puppet show along with every other failing Southerner blaming Wall Street—but the boy's just a boy. Still we get to talkin'. Seems he's there waiting too, waiting for the troops—to just “feel” a part of it all. As the Greys travel through pickin up new recruits. But acourse he's too young..

(Decides not to take the moment to remark on Cynthia's age)

Still he's eager to fight for the new revolution—for something to believe in—the kid all but prays the war'll last long enough for him to ... not stand on the sidelines--be a part of it all and ... We just keep talkin and it all seems so simple. Crossed paths. [I] hardly had to change a thing—no mixing fact with fiction—just choice words. [I] told him how I was set to go too, getting' my chance to serve and yet, dammit, I needed to take care of my own son, needing to take him to the next doctor (that I couldn't afford) and duty, family, God, Country ... And there in front of Keenen's Groceries, my crowning achievement in my body of work as an actor; as one of the greats: written and performed for an audience of one. I watched him get . . . swept up in it all. Watched him drift then brought him back. We talked for what?: two hours until *he* finally came up with the grand idea: and *he* was begging *me* to sign up in my place. Didn't I see: Didn't it make sense: I was already signed up; what purpose would it serve for me to be branded as a traitor and him to go home to wait when—all that had to be done was for someone to sign in with my name when the troops came. So we traded. The kid became a very young looking Clayton Thompson and I started my new life as Peter Daniels.

(Slight pause. FRANK just stares at him.)

SUZANNE

They traded names.

FRANK

Yeah, I got that.

JACOB

Sweet story. You know what I call that?

JENNA

What happened to the boy?

CYNTHIA

Which one?

JENNA

The one who went to war for you.

MARTIN

Peter: the real one.

PETER

... Ahhh, I don't know his name. He took my name, I made up the name Peter Daniels. Looks good on a program. But we .. uh ... kept correspondence with each other best we could. I headed North and kept working. Sent money home when I had it through channels. Kept forwarding my mail to the next stop. Then all but a month ago .. [I] received a copy, back through channels, telling me that the general counsel of the new Confederation of the Southern States regretted to inform those in relation to Clayton Thompson ... That Clayton had been killed fighting bravely in the battle of ... I don't know the field—somebody's field. Exactly where was not part of the news—or I forgot it. Fool kid had to be a hero. Didn't make it more than fourteen months. So ... Victoria received word of her husband's death and .. uh .. To her and to the world Clayton Thompson[ is] dead. And that's how I have a 'not so much' a wife. Long live Peter Daniels. I'm not proud of it.

MARTIN

No reason you should be.

SUZANNE

So a boy without a name died in a field without a name for a Country that seemed to have died in childbirth.

JACOB

Did it?

MARTIN

Lee Surrendered. It / should be.



FRANK

Walker's still fighting.

JACOB

How would you know this?

FRANK

You hear things. Don't paint with his brush.

CYNTHIA

(To Peter:)

Do you still send them money?

PETER

"From a friend." When I can.

So, my point, young lady: when I said I've been down your road—Been where you *are* ... I've *been* where you are. And the scenery isn't all that pretty. So, like she said—

(Referring to Suzanne:)

Be a kid as long as you can. Play games. Worry your parents. Just ... don't grow up so fast.

SUZANNE

When it's too late; it's too late.

(Slight pause.)

JENNA

You miss them?

PETER

More every day. Him. If we're being honest here: Him.

FRANK

By all means let's just be honest here.

JENNA

Little Gerald.

PETER

Yeah.

JENNA

And your birth name is Clayton?

PETER

[Was.]

JENNA

My actual birth name is Jennifer. Not Jenna. Morrison. Jenna LaFleur just sounded more poetic.

CYNTHIA

Oh: we could play guess your name. Put all our real names in a hat and ...  
(She trails off realizing no one is paying attention.)

PETER

Anyone ever call you Jenny?

JENNA

Not if they ever wanted to call on me again.

PETER

.. I'll [be sure to] remember that.

JENNA

No: that is not what I meant. That, I believe, was the champagne.

(Another crash. No one really reacts by now. They just look out to the lobby to see if anything more will come of it. Nothing follows. All but CYNTHIA return to their vigil.)

CYNTHIA

Wait.

SUZANNE

Dear, no one's in the mood for games?

CYNTHIA

(Getting up and moving downstage.)

Wait.

JACOB

What? What / is it?

MARTIN

What?

CYNTHIA  
(Shushing them down:)

You hear that?

MARTIN

Hear what?

CYNTHIA

Exactly.

(They all listen. There is nothing but their silence now.  
The Chanting outside has stopped.)

MARTIN

Where did they go?

(They listen again: there is no sound from the lobby.)

FRANK

Don't hate me but ... I think *this* is the time to be nervous.

CYNTHIA

No. Listen. You hear that?

(Hearing something else:)

Wait a minute. Wait a minute.

(Runs to the backstage door.)

JACOB

/ Wha--?

MARTIN

Where are / you—?

FRANK

Now she's lost it.

(JACOB watches as NED follows Cynthia's running around  
the stage with his eyes.)

CYNTHIA

(Feeling the ground at the back door.)

It's wet. Is this wet? This is water, right?

MARTIN

What?

CYNTHIA

It's wet. [I think] it's raining. I think—  
(Tries the door but, of course, it's locked.)

FRANK

How do you--?

JACOB

Let her go. She's just working off the stress.  
(To Ned:)  
Keep your eyes to yourself. She's sixteen.

NED

[I] wasn't doin' anything ...

JACOB

Yeah. Right.

CYNTHIA

Hey! Hey!  
(At the lobby door.)  
Is it raining?

(She starts to push open the door--it opens enough for her to see then is slammed back shut.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY (from the lobby:)

Get yourself back in there!

CYNTHIA

(Opens the door a peak and looks outside.)

I just wanna see.

(And she has. She closes the door again and backs away, then turns in the aisle and announces her finding to the group:)

It's raining! It's raining!

(She starts triumphantly back down the aisle.)

It's raining.

(She steps back onto the stage with a hand from one of the men. She turns back and faces the lobby:)

Burn us down now you sons of a bitches. Sorry, ladies.

SUZANNE

Hopeless. Entirely hopeless.

CYNTHIA

Give me a drink.

(No one complies.)

Well, it was worth a shot.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE II

(At rise:

Everyone at this point appears to be asleep.

FRANK clearly so as he is evidently snoring.

JENNA, leaning on PETER, stirs, which opens his [PETER's] eyes. JENNA nestles back into his shoulder then somewhere in the back of her mind she realizes where she is. FRANK snores. JENNA sits up slowly, looking around, being watched by Peter.)

JENNA

[How long was I ... How long] was I asleep?

PETER

[I don't know.] We all dozed a spell at some time or 'nother.

JENNA

And you've been awake ... ?

PETER

I [didn't figure to disturb you]--you were sleeping.

JENNA

(Pats him on the shoulder:)

You're still . . . married.

PETER

Only in the eyes of God.

(JENNA gets up and stretches. She can feel the aftermath of her drinking begin to take hold.)

PETER

(Offers her a bottle:)

Hair of the dog?

JENNA

(She debates his offer.)

I don't usually do this.

(She takes the bottle and a swig then returns the bottle.)

Do you smoke?

PETER

[I] don't have any—

(JENNA takes the cigarette out of her purse and offers it to him.)

PETER

(Taking the butt.)

Obliged.

(PETER lights up.)

You wouldn't have a hunk a bread or cheese in there somewhere wouldya?

JENNA

I'm hoping you can keep a secret. One lost soul to another.

(She takes the cigarette from Peter and takes a long needed drag.)

PETER

(Flustered as she returns the cigarette to his possession.)

Women aren't supposed to smoke.

JENNA

And President's aren't supposed to get shot. It's been one helluva night.

PETER

Don't think I'll be returning this.

JENNA

Well, in that case ...

PETER

In that case what?

JENNA

(Not a compliment:)

[You're such a man.]

(And as PETER questions himself how to react to that last statement she snatches back the cigarette and takes one last draw. She returns the cigarette again.)

All yours.

(JENNA strolls the stage, checking on the others. FRANK, asleep at their makeshift poker table, lays across a bench as he continues to snore. MARTIN sleeps beside him, sitting on the floor with his back propped up against a table leg. Something has fallen to the floor between the two men, presumably from out of a coat pocket. SUZANNE and CYNTHIA each sleep slumped back on the sofa. JACOB

has set himself across three wooden folding chairs brought up from the audience section. NED lies curled up alone on the floor, his own coat tucked under his head as a pillow. She lingers a moment over NED.)

JENNA

You really believe he had anything to do with this?

PETER

Not my call [to make].

JENNA

Oh, right: You don't take sides.

PETER

[I] didn't say that.

JENNA

M-hmm.

PETER

You have a side.

JENNA

I retain my woman's prerogative to change my mind. Can't say I agree with the South's position on slavery but . . . can't condemn them for simply having a position. [As] I learned it this country was formed by a group of men telling England to stay out of our business. Then we break up into two groups asking the same thing from each other. Seemed like the natural order of things. One group says, "let me go" and the other group says, "no, [I won't let ya.]" Just sounds like too many marriages I know if you ask me.

PETER

You ever been married?

JENNA

(Just smiles.)

[(If I say yes, you'll ask me too much more . . . if I say no, you'll tell me I can't have an opinion. So . . . I'll just smile.)]

PETER

Well, too bad you don't get a vote on things.

JENNA

Some day. Coloreds got their vote.



PETER  
Two-thirds.

JENNA  
Tomorrow: women.

PETER  
Yeah .. well ...  
(He finishes the cigarette and extinguishes it by grinding the rest out on the floor.)  
(JENNA chooses not to remark on Peter's not offering her the last drag of tobacco.)

JENNA  
You'll see.

PETER  
Will I?

JACOB  
(Unmoving from his position, precariously stretched across chairs.)  
"Will I" what?

PETER  
(Undaunted by Jacob's apparent listening in:)  
See women get the vote.

JACOB  
Hmmpf ... not in my lifetime.

JENNA  
And how long you been awake?

JACOB  
(Referring to Frank:)  
Who can sleep through the fall of Richmond over there?  
(No reply.)  
Don't worry: you're secret's safe. What you smoke is the least of my concerns.  
(Finally moving from his resting position; referring to Ned:)  
And yeah, I think he definitely had something to do with it.

JENNA

We all know your thoughts [on the matter].

JACOB

So, why are you protecting him?

JENNA

(Shrugs:)

Somebody has to.

CYNTHIA

Jakey?

(Neither PETER nor JENNA stoop so low as to comment.)

CYNTHIA

Jakey, I'm sorry. I should have told you.

JACOB

.. It's ... OK ... alright?

JENNA

We'll leave you two a moment to yourselves?

JACOB

No / need.

CYNTHIA

I had the worst dream.

JENNA

Sorry to spoil it for you, child, but it wasn't a dream: we're still here.

CYNTHIA

You don't believe in dreams?

JENNA

In Ghosts? [Maybe] In Dreams? No.

CYNTHIA

It was so real: I dreamed there was a funeral parade as far as I could see: white horses [and] everything else [was] in black. And everyone was crying. [And] I remember asking somebody, "what about us? What about us?" And you know what they said? They looked right through me like we weren't even there. Like we didn't even matter.

JENNA

[And] we were all in your dream?

CYNTHIA

I think so. But nobody cared. Nobody cared.

JENNA

(To JACOB:)

This is your cue to comfort her.

SUZANNE

(Eyes still closed for the moment.)

Not wise.

JACOB

Ah, she lives.

JENNA

Et tu Brute?

PETER

Is everybody here awake now?

(FRANK snores.)

PETER

I stand corrected.

(Pause. SUZANNE and CYNTHIA both adjust their positions on the sofa.)

SUZANNE

Have we heard any news yet?

JACOB

You mean / is he—?

SUZANNE

No. Don't.  
What time is it?

(No reply: no one has a time piece.)

CYNTHIA

Mr. Osbourne is the only one with a watch. You want me to wake him?.

JACOB

I'm not reachin' [in]to his pocket.

JENNA

Aww, what a tainted childhood you must've led.

(To Cynthia:)

Which pocket, honey?

CYNTHIA

... Left ... I think—I don't know.

JENNA

Jacket or pants?

CYNTHIA

Coat; it was definitely his coat.

JACOB

Thank the Lord.

JENNA

.. Isn't it time you grew up?

(JENNA reaches in through his outside pockets and then to his inside. MARTIN opens his eyes warily:)

MARTIN

What do you think you're doing?

JENNA

We were trying not to wake you.

JACOB

She was looking for the time.

PETER

[You] dropped something.

JENNA

What?

PETER

Out of his pocket. [A] letter or something.

(JENNA picks up a pile the papers off the floor and offers it to Martin.)

JENNA

Flyers.

MARTIN

They're not mine.

JACOB

Must be Frank's then.

PETER

[He] won 'em fair and square.

CYNTHIA

That's still debatable.

JENNA

(Finding it among the flyers; asking if it's Martin's:)

Letter?

MARTIN

Also, his.

JENNA

(Reading the outside of the envelope:)

It's addressed: "To the editors of the National Intelligencer".

MARTIN

Hopefully announcing his retirement.

(JENNA moves to put the letter back in Frank's coat--then thinks again--reconsiders and finally places the letter on top of the sleeping man.)

JACOB

(To Martin:)

How could you possibly sleep next to that noise?

MARTIN

I have daughters. And a loud wife.

(Lifting himself up.)

Which I'd like to get back to.

PETER

And the time, sir?

MARTIN

(Checking his watch.)

Quarter after ... seven.

PETER

Quarter after seven?

CYNTHIA

In the morning?

My father's going to have such a tantrum.

JENNA

I'm sure he'll understand. Not 'bout you two but ...

(To Suzanne:)

And your husband should be getting up soon, isn't he:, what's he going to do when he finds you not there?

SUZANNE

My husband ... should be ... actually getting home just about now.

JENNA

I'm sorry, I thought ... last night you said he would be asleep.

SUZANNE

Yes, I did. And I'm sure he was. With her. I generally sleep in until nine. So he leaves her just after the sun comes up so he can pretend to wake up with me. And he'll certainly be surprised to find I'm the one not there this time.

JENNA

... I'm sorry.  
I didn't know.

SUZANNE

No need [to feel pity for me, dear.] There'll still be questioning to come.

JACOB

Meaning?

SUZANNE

Meaning we'll all have to answer to our associations with the Booth family, won't we?

JENNA

What do you think you're suggesting?

SUZANNE

I suggest nothing; only that they may be asking us some very personal questions, dear. Such as how well do you know the Booths. How intimately?

JENNA

Really? We're .. doing .. this?

SUZANNE

It's what they're going to ask.

JENNA

(Flustered:)

And ... why?

SUZANNE

Better you get your blushing done here, with friends, than under the microscope.

JENNA

I don't need a rehearsal.

JACOB

You're claiming you know Wilkes Booth in that way?

JENNA

(Debates her options before answering.)

Once. It was a mistake. It wasn't repeated and it wasn't recently. When I first hired ... I'm not ... It was a tragic mistake.

SUZANNE

Mistakes have a way of becoming very bad habits.

JENNA

I'm not going to dignify that with an explanation.

MARTIN

Ladies, please ... be ... ladies.

CYNTHIA

Oh, my lord. You two are just uh both a pair of hypocrites?  
And you called *me* a slut.

JENNA

And I am so much older than you.

CYNTHIA

I don't see a ring on your finger.

PETER

(To Jacob regarding Cynthia:)

You hold her back / and I'll—

JENNA

You'll do nothing of the kind.

MARTIN

Ladies. Enough [is enough].

(Referring to Suzanne:)

She's right: they're going to question us. And we all know that dalliances come with the<sup>2</sup> ... career choices we've made. Right or wrong we all have a past.

FRANK

Now I know I've died and gone to hell: When Martin here becomes the voice of reason— ...

(His voice trails off as he recognizes the letter sitting atop his person. Non-committedly:)

Where'd you get this?

PETER

It fell out of your pocket.

FRANK

(Remaining uncommitted:)

Did you read it?

MARTIN

No, should we have?

FRANK

No. No ...

(He checks to be sure the envelope is still sealed then replaces into an inside coat pocket.)

Nearly forgot all about this in all the commotion.

(He sits up.)

So, what's news? When do we get out of this moth bitten flea hole? Anybody got a—

(Finds a bottle and takes a small nip, he swishes it around in his mouth to clean the palette.)

PETER

No change yet I'm afraid.

FRANK

[The] time?

---

<sup>2</sup> In another time, another 150 years away he might at this moment admit to his sexual orientation ... but it's not ... and some things can not be spoken ... not in 1865.



SUZANNE

Quarter / after—

PETER

Twenty somethin' after seven.

FRANK

Wha'd I miss?

(JENNA looks to Suzanne condemning her to hell if she utters a word.)

MARTIN

All depends. How long were you just laying there with your eyes closed?

FRANK

A gentleman never tells. Forty-five minutes and twelve seconds on the dot: never said I was a gentleman.

JACOB

It was your snoring that woke all of us up.

FRANK

And I've also been known to be a dubious liar to boot.

(To Jenna:)

[I] remember where I know you from.

JENNA

(Uninterested:)

Do tell.

FRANK

Baltimore.

(A beat.)

JENNA

That's it? Baltimore?

FRANK

I saw you in Julius Caesar. You played Brutus' wife.

JENNA

Why, yes I did. Thank you for remembering.

FRANK

And guess who played Marc Anthony?

(Pronouncing it 'Antony'. A beat ... for dramatic effect:)

Mister John Wilkes Booth.

JENNA

All three Booth brothers were in that production.

FRANK

Such a small world.

JENNA

You ... think that I'm involved in this somehow? Because I know a Booth? We all know the Booths. Find someone else to blame.

CYNTHIA

I don't know the Booths. I was always too star struck.

JENNA

You really have to decide which age to play and when.

CYNTHIA

I said "star struck" not "shy".

JENNA

Consider yourself lucky.

JACOB

(To the sleeping Ned:)

Which leaves you.

(The lobby door opens up. a very somber CAPTAIN DONNESSEY stands again in its light.)

SUZANNE

Yes? Captain, can we help you?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

He's dead.

SUZANNE

Excuse me?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Lincoln. He died. They couldn't save him.

(There is a deafening silence among the group.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

I thought you'd want to know.

(Again, no reply. What can they say that won't make them appear guilty or could be somehow held against them?

Silence being the only response that may get them by.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY waits a moment longer then exits back into the lobby. Pause.)

CYNTHIA

What does that mean?

MARTIN

It means we don't go home.

CYNTHIA

We haven't done anything—I haven't done anything.

JACOB

It doesn't matter. They want someone to blame.

(A beat. He kicks at Ned.)

Get up, Sprang.

PETER

Hey—

MARTIN

Sir, there's no need / for—

JENNA

What do you think you're doing?

JACOB

I didn't hurt him.

(Pushes at Ned again.)

Wake up. C'mon, get up.

(To the others.)

He knows something and that's what we need to get out of here: information.

MARTIN

Holy mother of God, man, are you out of your mind?

JACOB

(Looks back at Martin: a beat.)

[Are] you?

[OK.] I'll play nice, [then]:

JACOB (Continued:)  
(He nudges Ned.)

Sprang.  
Sprang, wake up.

(He looks back to the group for permission to nudge a little harder. He follows through with a measured push.)

Sprang. Get your sorry ass up.

NED

What? Wha—What is it? Am I ... late? Are we already in Act Two?  
(He looks around. Starts to focus.)

What?

(A beat. Each of the group finds themselves waiting for someone else to speak up before:)

JACOB

Lincoln's dead.

NED

(Takes the news in for a moment.)

Oh ... Do we get to go home?

MARTIN

Not quite yet.

JACOB

I thought you “lived” here.

NED

I just sleep here sometimes

MARTIN

They believe someone here knows something and ... we've all been sharing what we know and we thought you could educate us on what history you might have.

JACOB

You're such a liar.

NED

[What?]

(Looks from face to face.)

... I don't know nuthin'.

(His eyes stop at Cynthia moment longer than on the others; searching for some compassion.)

PETER

(Sincerely:)

Well . . . I believe him.

JACOB

I don't.

JENNA

We know you don't.

JACOB

(Lifts his hand to quiet the others and make his point with the following line of questions:)

Tell us what you did to that door.

NED

(Not following:)

[The] door?

JACOB

There's a hole in the door to box seven and somebody put it there. [The] door leading into [the] President's box. Somebody put a hole in it.

NED

... Harry Ford told me to [do it].

SUZANNE

Harry Ford?

NED

[Yes.]

(Explaining himself mostly to Cynthia, as if her believing him would turn the tides on the matter:)

So, the President's man could see on him without bothering anybody.

JACOB

Or so Booth could see just where Lincoln was sitting without being noticed.

NED

... I ... I don't know. The shooter could've looked through it too, I guess.

MARTIN

"Killer." He's dead.

JACOB

Booth—he means Booth. You and Wilkes Booth? [You're] pretty friendly, hunh?

NED

He treats me alright.

JACOB

Buys you drinks.

NED

He doesn't ... look down on me, [if] that's what you mean. Treats me . . . good. Better'n most.

JACOB

Look at me; not her.

(To Cynthia)

Move away. H'ain't safe.

(As CYNTHIA moves away.)

You like to watch her, don't you? Why? 'Cause she's so innocent? Well, she ain't so innocent, Sprang, she's just like you. Used.

What? You think she'd treat you nice, hunh? You'd like that wouldn't you? You like it when people treat you *nice*, right? Like Booth? So, if Booth asked you to do him a favor from time to time ...

NED

He t .. told me to tell Peanut to hold his horse is all. So I told Peanut—I / didn't know—

JACOB

Why?

MARTIN

You told / Peanut?

SUZANNE

The stage boy? To hold / Wilkes' horse?

MARTIN

The child was kicked in the head.

NED

I didn't have nuthin'—

JACOB

Why'd he have to hold the horse? Why didn't you just tie the animal up?

NED

[I don't know.] He asked ...

JACOB

Cause he had to get away: fast.

NED

I didn't know, alright? How many times do I have to say it?

(To Frank:)

You know Wilkes. Better'n me. He asked me. It wasn't nothin' .. I didn't ... He asks things, right? I just had Peanut hold his horse---

JACOB

You're saying you knew it was Booth running across the stage.

(As the interrogation continues FRANK pulls the letter from his coat pocket and after debating a moment or so opens it and begins to read it to himself.)

NED

Somebody who looked like Booth, [yes]. But I couldn't swear it was [him].

JACOB

That's what you said. You said, "don't say which way he ran."

NED

You said it was Booth, not me.

JACOB

Because it *was* Booth.

NED

[But] I didn't know wha'd he done.

(He finds himself lost to explain anymore. Nothing more is asked but the attention is still riveted on him. He tries to wait it out but is unable to do so:)

He just asked me to hold a horse. Why would I say, "no"?

MARTIN

(To Frank:)

What are you reading that's so more important than this?

FRANK

(Still reading as he talks:)

He asks things. Small favours. This afternoon. I ran into Wilkes a few blocks away from here where some soldiers were marching a troop of confederates up to the Old Capital Prison. There he takes out this letter and hands it to me and asks that I deliver it to the Editor's office of the paper in the morning.

JENNA

He tell you what was in it?

FRANK

No. Hand to God.

(Offers the letter to any taker.)

(JENNA takes the letter and begins to read it herself.)

SUZANNE

Read it for everybody.

JENNA

“To the editor:

May this letter find you well. That you are reading this can only be that I have either carried out God's purpose or in our attempt have made our voices known. Either way I may presume I am beyond man's hand at this point. What I have done, for I will not assume failure, is deliver a blow to the North as an answer that we do not accept your terms to end this war. Would that our fathers had given up hope at Valley Forge when all looked lost? It is said that "As goes the king so goes the kingdom". This self-proclaimed king's reign must be ended. Lincoln has sold out this country to the scavengers of wall street and lined their pockets with Southern blood. Blood that cries out to us from the soil our forefathers fought and died for. As free men. This country was built for their children, for the white, not the black man, but King Abraham with his hidden agenda, to rape and pillage Southern soil under the guise of his own declared morality, has in truth bankrupt this country for his own pride and the prosperity of a few. God may censure me for what I've done but history will not. My life, my ambition, my own calling, is for a higher stage, for that of a new Country that has been fought and paid for ten times more than what we paid in blood during our suffering under England. May freedom ring in the heart of every true man. We are not heroes but only Soldiers in this war. As God may be our witness.”

He signed it

“Booth - Herold - Atzerodt – Payne”

(Pause.)



NED

See? That proves what I'm saying. My--my name's not on it. My my my my name's not on there anywhere.

MARTIN

Who are Herold, Azterodt and Payne?

FRANK

I've never seen this before in my life—I've never met them.

(Referring to Ned:)

Like *he* said Wilkes *asked me* to deliver this. Then I forgot about it.

SUZANNE

You don't just forget something like that.

FRANK

My dear, in my condition this evening, I can forget almost anything.

NED

So ... That proves it, right? I'm not who you want.

(Pause.)

JACOB

Add his name to the letter.

JENNA

What?

NED

No.

FRANK

I don't think—

JACOB

(To Frank:)

Add his or yours. You already have the letter.

MARTIN

We can't give them that. / Be reasonable—

JACOB

Sure, we can. Our names aren't on it.

(To Frank:)

Add his.

NED

Why!?

JENNA

It won't do what you don't want it to do. It implicates us because we have it no matter whose name is on it.

JACOB

Who has a pen?

NED

Please.

MARTIN

Harry Ford's office is already open.

JACOB

Get one [from in there].

(But MARTIN lags behind to watch the goings on onstage as Jacob continues at Ned:)

JACOB

Then maybe you'll tell us what we need to know.

NED

Why are you doing this?

SUZANNE

If there's something more you know, Mr. Sprang, I would suggest you tell him.

CYNTHIA

Tell us, Mr. Sprang.

JACOB

(Referring to Cynthia:)

Tell her. Confess it to her.

JENNA

(To Jacob:)

Don't.

JACOB

Give me your belts.

PETER

I doubt this man has any—

JACOB

Stay out of it, Reb.

(Having not received a belt he pulls a fabric decoration off the wall and tears it into strips in order to bind Ned's feet and hands.)

We're not getting out of here unless we give them what they want.

PETER

We can wait a bit longer.

JACOB

We've been waiting all night. Martin, you, lower fly three.

MARTIN

What?

JACOB

The ropes. Over there. Pull on the ropes [and] lower the fly.

MARTIN

Number three?

NED

You don't ... need to do this. I I I don't know anything more than I told you ... P-please.

JACOB

(To Frank:)

You. Help me.

(Aside to the women:)

I'm only going to tease it out of him.

(Frank and Cynthia hold Ned down as Jacob binds him. To Martin offstage:)

That rope.

MARTIN (offstage)

This rope?

JACOB

That rope.

NED

A ROPE! A ROPE!! I stole him a rope. That's all I did but it wasn't ... It was more'n two months ago. He was wantin kidnap him is all. That's what he was going to do. I swear. But then nothing happened.

SUZANNE

He was going to kidnap the President? From here? On the stage; in front of a whole audience?

FRANK

That's how Wilkes shot him, wasn't it?: In front of a whole audience

JENNA

Alright, Mr. Ritter, you have your information, now let him go.

JACOB

No, there's more. Who are Herold, Azterodt and Payne?

NED

He was gonna trade Lincoln for soldiers. That was—that what he said—that was what he was gonna—but nothing happened.

JENNA

He doesn't / know—

(Her words are stopped by the sight of the fly: a long heavy curtain pipe on which scenery is generally raised and lowered onto the stage moves down into view for a matter of reaching distance. NED watches it wide eyed.)

JENNA

You're not / proposing to—

JACOB

Shut up. For all I know your one of them too. But I'm not. And we're not.

FRANK

I'm not.

JACOB

Fetch me that rope.

(He is referring to a rope that is coiled up at one end of the fly. FRANK brings it to him and JACOB starts working a loop quickly into it.)

JENNA

You can't do this. Peter?

(But PETER is motionless to help.)

JACOB

Stay out of it, Daniels—or whatever your name is.

(To Ned:)

You gonna talk now? You gonna tell us what we need to know?

JENNA

(Snatches up the letter:)

I'm burning the letter, alright.

(She takes it to the footlights and indeed sets it afire.)

See? So now you can't add anybody's name to it. We all know it can only hurt us and none of us--NONE of us are named in it.

SUZANNE

Then it's your word against ours.

JENNA

What?

JACOB

Sprang?

(He places the noose around Ned's throat. Before Ned can yell Jacob gags him with another strip of material. To Martin:)

Take him up.

JENNA

What?

(To Suzanne:)

Why're you ... You were so busy trying to control us all earlier—What?: Did we not feel bad enough for you that your husband has a mistress?

Peter?

JACOB

Take him up!

MARTIN (offstage:)

He's too heavy.

JACOB

Add counterweight.

MARTIN (offstage:)

What?

(PETER runs offstage towards the back wings [up left].)

JACOB

(Ungagging Ned only long enough for a reply:)

You hit me, you saw him run, you told me not to say which way he went. You had Peanut hold his horse. What else do you know?

NED

Pleeeeeeease.

(JACOB shoves the gag back in then signals Martin to take him higher.)

JENNA

This is not us!! This can't be us!! Think about what you're doing here!! They'll ask questions. The army will sort it all out!! Peter!? Where did— ... ?

SUZANNE

He ran, child. He's a runner.

(And the fly is back on its way up. The rope begins to lose its slack as SUZANNE again begins to pray)

JENNA

You can't do this!!

(CAPTAIN DONNESSEY rushes in thru the lobby door with PETER in tow.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

What the hell is going on in here?

(JACOB immediately steps in front of Ned and grabs hold of the rope over Ned's head, catching it in his fist and holding its tautness away from Ned. FRANK, following JACOB's lead also steps in front of Ned, the two of them blocking Ned from Captain Donnessey's view.)

JACOB

Nothing, sir. Just tidying up. Things got broken up a bit in here. Making use / of our time.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Where is everybody?

MARTIN (offstage:)

I can't hold it much more.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Who's that?

(JACOB winces as the rope burns into his hand.)

FRANK

Just Martin, sir. Getting a hammer and nails.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Get out here, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN (offstage:)

I can't ...

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

I said, "now".

(A beat. MARTIN emerges from the wings.)

MARTIN

(As he enters:)

... find any nails. Or a hammer for that matter.

JENNA

No one is—

(But her words are cut short as JACOB's hand gives up its grip and Ned's body slowly starts to rise above the two men in front of him.)

CYNTHIA

Oh my god ...

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

What the— ...

FRANK

(Watching Ned rise:)

"And lo, he was lifted up for our transgressions."

PETER

(Overlapping:)

I told you.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

(Rushing forward:)

Bring that man down.

MARTIN

But you told me to—

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Now! Bring him—

MARTIN

I have to / go—

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

NOW!

(JENNA, CYNTHIA and MARTIN all rush off stage to lower Ned back down. CAPTAIN DONNESSEY moves to attend to him.)

JACOB

He was helping Booth. He was a part of it.

JENNA

He said he wasn't.

JACOB

He 'said' a lot of things.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

If this man dies ... this is just what I need right now.

(The rope is removed from Ned's neck. He is still breathing but is at a semi-conscious state at best.)

JACOB

(Referring to Peter:)

And I wouldn't be so sure about him, either.



CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Quiet.

JACOB

We weren't really going to hang him just scare the information out of him, that's all.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

If there's any hanging going to be done it'll be by a Military court and not a group of half crazed actors.

FRANK

He's not an actor.

JACOB

I am more than willing to give my testimony.

PETER

That's enough from you.

JACOB

Pardon me?

PETER

Enough.

JACOB

Enough?

PETER

Enough.

(JENNA, CYNTHIA and MARTIN reenter as CAPTAIN DONNESSEY checks over Ned.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Find me some water—

SUZANNE

We don't have—

VOICE FROM THE LOBBY

Mike!

(CAPTAIN DONNESSEY looks up catches sight of another soldier from the lobby.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Get him some water. I'll be right back.

PETER

You can't just leave ...

(CAPTAIN DONNESSEY looks over the situation--knows he has to go—)

PETER

They'll just do it again.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

(Pulls a revolver out from its holster and hands it to Peter with the instructions:)

Don't use it.

(He hurries out; back up the aisle and into the lobby.)

(Pause. PETER holds the gun out and stands over Ned.)

JACOB

So you *are* grey.

PETER

This has nothing to do with [being] blue or grey.

JACOB

Didn't think you had it in ya. I'll give you that.

(He starts to circle around, rubbing his wrist and hand.)

PETER

Don't move around.

JACOB

Or ... what? You ever even used one of those before?

(NED begins to cough.)

PETER

Untie him.

JACOB

You untie him.

PETER

(To Martin:)

Untie him.

(To Frank as Martin moves in as ordered:)

Give him a drink.

JACOB

(Still circling:)

Don't.

PETER

Frank.

FRANK

Whatever you want.

(Holding up a bottle by the neck.)

Don't got any water; all I got is—I

(And he swings the bottle out at PETER who in reflex turns and shoots, hitting FRANK in the leg. JACOB takes the moment to jump Peter and wrestles him for the gun. The women react as the two men grapple but PETER is quickly overpowered by JACOB who gains the firearm and straddles himself over Peter holding the gun at Peter's face. There is a moment when anything could happen.)

CYNTHIA

NO!! Sprang!! Sprang!!

(But JACOB stays transfixed on Peter. JACOB then turns, while still holding down Peter by straddling his chest, and re-aims the gun on Ned, giving Martin the chance to move away as

A rifle is cocked in the lobby doorway.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Not a twitch.

(He holds the rifle aimed squarely on Jacob as he continues down the aisle.)

Not a muscle.

(JACOB complies. He continues to follow the rest of Captain Donnessey's directions:)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Lower it. Look at me. At me. Lay it on the ground. In the air; Hands.

(JACOB raises his hands into the air.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY (Continued:)

Get up and back away.

(To Peter:)

You too. Back away.

(As he reaches the stage he gathers up and holsters the revolver.)

What happened?

JACOB

(Referring to Peter and indicating Frank:)

Your reb shot him.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

(Takes this all in and assesses priorities: Frank then Sprang:)

Someone get a bandage on that. Get him something to drink before he chokes to death then everybody—EVERYBODY is to be on this side of me. Where I can see you.

(CYNTHIA and SUZANNE tend to FRANK as JENNA tends to NED. )

SUZANNE

Do something for him—we need to—

(Gathers the playbills to dab at his leg.)

CYNTHIA

(Overlapping her:)

We need to stop the blood.

FRANK

Not the play bills.

(On second thought:)

Yes, the play bills.

(CYNTHIA takes the fabric strips Martin removed from Ned and uses them to help Suzanne bind up Frank's leg as FRANK continues to dab each of the playbills with his blood.)

FRANK

(To Peter:)

Thank you, boy; I think you have just made me a very rich man.

MARTIN

(to Donnessey:)

In all due respect, sir, what will become of us?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

That remains to be seen.

(To Frank:)

Can you walk?

FRANK

I'm feeling no pain, thank you for your concern.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Nothing happened here, [you] understand? Nothing. Enough gone on tonight without me having to explain all this.

Understood?

Good.

(Pause. CAPTAIN DONNESSEY breathes deep before issuing the next commands.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

When you're ready: We are going to file out that door.

(Indicating the backstage door.)

JENNA

Why? Where are we going?

CYNTHIA

/ Home?

SUZANNE

Are you escorting / us home, Captain?

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

... To jail.—

(The group react to the word 'jail' with questions of disbelief such as "What?" "You can't be serious?" "Jail?" "Haven't you done enough to us?" and the like as Captain Donnessey continues:)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY (continuing:)

—For questioning. About earlier only. Last night. Only. Where you'll be held safe. If not from each other.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY (Continued:)

(Over their objections:)

I don't want to hear it. I don't want to hear it.

(They quiet down.)

If you had anything to do with this—with last night—we'll find it out. If you didn't ... we'll figure that out too. *We* will decide.

(To Jacob and to Peter:)

Not you.

(To Martin, referring to Frank:)

Get him on his feet.

(To Peter referring to Jenna with Ned:)

Help them with him.

(He walks far upstage with his rifle still trained on the men. Once he arrives at the stage door he wraps on it to alert them outside:)

Ready.

(The door is opened and daylight streams in.)

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

One at a time.

SUZANNE

A common police buggy?

CYNTHIA

(The first to exit:)

Will you tell my father where I am? His name is William Lewis.

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

Later. Right now you are all under—

MARTIN

Could I trouble you to gather my—

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

—You are all under arrest for acts of treason against the Government of the United States of America.

JENNA

This is not right ... This is ... We are private citizens, we' are not soldiers. We have rights—

CAPTAIN DONNESSEY

This is an act of treason during a time of war. Different rules apply. This is a military matter now: you have no rights.

We'll sort it out. (Before anyone else can object as they file out before him:)

(JENNA is the last to leave, followed finally by CAPTAIN DONNESSEY himself. Pause. We can hear the chain rattle and the distinguishable clack of the padlock as the door is locked down shut again.)

(Lights dim as the scene ends).

## EPILOGUE

(Without lights fading to black the cast and crew [CYNTHIA, SUZANNE, MARTIN, JACOB, NED, PETER, FRANK and JENNA re-enter in the order they left stage through the wings; each entering from a different location [four from the left and four from the right]. As they enter they each move to take a place in line running the breadth of the stage. Once all are in position lights alter to halo each of them in their own light. One by one they take a last step into the light as they address the audience:)

### CYNTHIA

Ford's Theatre closed her doors following Lincoln's assassination and remained closed for three months while a country healed. The eventual announcement of the playhouse's reopening was met with angry threats again of burning the building to the ground. At which point the government stepped back in and closed the playhouse permanently. The cast and crew of Ford's Theatre, along with its owners and nearly a hundred of other suspected conspirators throughout the city, were arrested and held for questioning—although charges were eventually dropped for all suspects but eight. Among the eight was Ford's Theatre stagehand Ned Sprang. As for Cynthia Lewis, she ended her short career in the theatre and went on to marry a grocery store owner in Elkton, Maryland. She never spoke of her days on the stage nor her involvement on that night.

### MARTIN

Martin Osbourne moved back to Ohio with his wife and daughters where he tried to continue his career but couldn't be cast due to what would come to be known as the Ford's Theatre curse, even though for his part, he kept his secret; including never revealing his orientation to the day he died—as it was a time when things of this nature would not be—could not be discussed. He changed careers and began a delivery service and eventually ran a dairy farm in Akron. Meanwhile back on April 26th, 1865 (twelve days after the assassination), in another barn in Virginia, surrounded by Union troops, a man believed to be John Wilkes Booth was shot and killed by Union Sergeant Boston Corbett.



### FRANK

The names of Azterodt, Herold and Payne were soon to be known to the whole country. While even without the evidence of Booth's mysterious letter connections were made linking the three men to Wilkes Booth's plan. Also held for trial was Mary Surratt, in whose Boarding house Booth and his three immediate accomplices planned out the event. Frank Matthews survived his injuries, yet would walk with a limp for the rest of his days. Two years later he would admit to the existence of Booth's letter and to burning it himself, alone in his room in the boarding house he lived in at the time. Eventually he would sell his bloodied play bills of that night to what he'd hoped to be private collectors; never admitting the blood wasn't his own but insinuating it came from the great orator himself. Which resulted only in paying off his own gambling debts until the next town. His own romance with the bottle took his life in the Spring of 1874.

### JACOB

The war of the states, although considered over with Lee's surrender to Grant five days prior to Lincoln's assassination, continued on. The last meeting of the Confederate Cabinet was held May 5, 1865. Confederate President Jefferson Davis was arrested while fleeing to Canada on May 10, 1865. Jacob Ritter became a key witness for the Government in regards to the case against Ned Sprang. He travelled further north and finally settled down in a small town in Vermont where he ran twice for City Council but never served.

### SUZANNE

Suzanne Hatterson's husband passed away from complications of pneumonia six months following Abraham Lincoln's death. She travelled for a few years with a small touring company doing plays for children. She never found fame nor posterity. In 1873 she visited her son in California one last time before leaving America and returning to her mother England. The trial of the conspirators was met with guilty verdicts for all eight defendants. On July 7, 1865 four of the eight were hung in the courtyard of the Old Arsenal Penitentiary. George Atzerodt, David Herold, Lewis Payne and Mrs. Mary Surratt. Mary Surratt was the first woman to be executed by the United States of America.

### NED

It was not until the morning of the hanging of the conspirators that Ned would find out his own life would be spared. Ned Sprang was sentenced to six years of hard labor at Fort Jefferson in Key West, Florida. He served four years as a model prisoner and was released early following an outbreak of yellow fever in the camp. Following his release Ned returned to work again for John T. Ford in a playhouse in Baltimore. Ford had always maintained Ned's innocence. Ned, suffered from health complications he'd picked up during his years in prison, and was baptized on his deathbed on February 7, 1875.

PETER

Peter Daniels disappeared from history shortly after being released. Not much more is there to say on the matter; I'd like to believe he headed south and resumed his old identity as Clayton Thompson.

JENNA

Jenna LaFleur moved to New York, where after a brief stint on the stage left the bright lights to marry a lawyer. In her later years she opened a dress shop on 43rd street where she met and became an avid supporter of Susan B. Anthony and the Women's National Suffragette movement. Ford's Theatre never reopened. It was eventually used by the government as an office building and records warehouse. It collapsed on June 9th, 1893, injuring 68 workers and killing twenty two men in the process.

(There is a pause. A moment of silence. Lights fade on the group leaving us a last look at the Presidential box but that too only lasts for a moment longer and then finally dims out fading to black.)

END