

2018

Writing Voice and Character for the Page and Stage

Remson DeJoseph
rdejoseph_5450@email.ric.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/honors_projects



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

DeJoseph, Remson, "Writing Voice and Character for the Page and Stage" (2018). *Honors Projects Overview*. 143.
https://digitalcommons.ric.edu/honors_projects/143

This Honors is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Projects at Digital Commons @ RIC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Projects Overview by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ RIC. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@ric.edu.

WRITING VOICE AND CHARACTER
FOR THE PAGE AND STAGE

By

Remson DeJoseph

An Honors Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for Honors

In

The Department of English

Table of Contents

Forward to Thesis	01
In the Dead of Night	02
Epistles of Justice	13
Good Friday: An Apocalyptic Tragedy.....	19

Forward to Thesis

For the last two semesters, I have been working on creating a Full-Length One-Act play as well as an expository character piece to accompany it to explore the differences in voice between prose and drama. During my research, I wrote an exercise that turned into a 10-minute play to explore more differences of voice between a Full-Length play and a short play.

Part of my research included not only reading but doing fieldwork which consisted of watching performances and performing in shows as well. I read *Leading Ladies* by Ken Ludwig as well as performed in the RIC Mainstage production of it. I was also in a production of *Beauty and the Beast* this semester. Taking the time to perform in a show not only helps me read the piece but furthers my understanding of plays and the inner workings of theatre so that I may apply it to my writing. When I had free days, I went to see shows performed at RIC, Trinity Rep, and other local theatre venues.

During my Fall semester, I read numerous plays which includes *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner, *Glengarry Glenn Ross* by David Mamet, and *Fences* by August Wilson. I also read *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey (and the stage adaptation written by Kesey and Dale Wasserman) as well as two craft books on playwriting: *Art of Dramatic Writing* by Lajos Egri and *The Art and Craft of Playwriting* by Jeffrey Hatcher. Along with my readings, I wrote 1 – 2 page responses, each detailing my thoughts and what I could “steal” from the pieces to further my research.

All of these aspects of my research aided my development of the 10-minute play, the prose piece, and the main focus of my thesis which is my One-Act play titled *Good Friday*. From what I learned, I was able to do extensive edits of my play as well as gather 8 – 10 RIC theatre students to construct a table reading of my play for further editing. I hope to use what I learned these last two semesters to better my writing in the future.

In the Dead of Night

by

Remson DeJoseph

CHARACTERS

JOHNNY	Out going, rising star, large groups of friends. Best friends with STEVEN since middle school (18 - 21)
STEVEN	Seclusive, studious, small group of friends, Best Friends with JOHNNY since middle school (18 - 21)
VOICE	A voice played on the radio.

SETTING

The living room of a house.

Stage: couch centered, front door stage right and another door leading to JOHNNYS room up stage left.

TIME

1:30 am.

AUTHORS NOTE:

AUTHORS NOTE: “//“ indicates when the character gets cut off for the next line to be read. One case, the speech with the “//“ will continue and the next line overlaps the following.

(Living room, dim lighting, JOHNNY walks around, in, out, of the living room, from his bed room with one thing then another, slightly muttering to himself. At one point, we hear a loud THUMP and a "FUCK, GOD...FUCK" when JOHNNY is in his room and comes out with a bleeding hand. The last thing he does is grab a black sweatshirt and beanie from his room and walks into the living room putting it on. While putting on the sweatshirt, his cellphone rings and he nervously tries to finish what he's doing, but winds up taking his shirt off completely, revealing a well built body. He answers his phone.)

JOHNNY:

(Whispering) Hello?...Oh, ok, hold up.

(He hangs up phone, then walks to front door to open. In walks STEVEN, slightly frantic and worried. Everything whispered unless mentioned.)

Are you okay?	STEVEN
Yeah.	JOHNNY
What's going on, what happened?	STEVEN
Everything's fine.	JOHNNY
Fine?	STEVEN
Yeah.	JOHNNY
<i>(Notices hand)</i> What happened to your hand?	STEVEN
Nothing, no time for that.	JOHNNY
Are you sure you're okay?	STEVEN

JOHNNY
Yes I'm fine, seriously.

STEVEN
So why did you call? And why is your shirt off?

JOHNNY
I was putting on a sweatshirt.

STEVEN
It's warm in here.

JOHNNY
I put it on for outside. Now listen. I need your help with something.

STEVEN
What?

JOHNNY
It's important.

STEVEN
Alright, tell me what.

JOHNNY
I hafta find my brother, Steve, I hafta.
(Steve is even more confused but then puts it together and gets annoyed.)

STEVEN
Oh...my God

JOHNNY
I know its late, I'm sorry if I interrupted your homework or whatever // but I —

STEVEN
I was in the middle of studying for the test // we have-

JOHNNY
I know, I know, I know. But please, it's my brother. I'm the only one who seems to fuckin' care about it. My parents wouldn't talk to me about it, no hope on the fliers I've put // out earlier —

STEVEN
Wh-where are your parents?

JOHNNY
They went out of town last night.

STEVEN
(Breaking the whisper) I knew it. I fucking // knew it.

JOHNNY
 Shhh! Quiet will ya?

STEVEN
 There's no one home!

JOHNNY
 It's not a matter of who's home, its dark out and you shouldn't be yelling // so loud
 —

STEVEN
 You're fucking high, aren't you?

JOHNNY
(Pause. Breaking whisper) You're gonna' do this now?

STEVEN
(Even more angrier) I knew it...I FUCKING knew it.

(He walks over to the light switch and turns it on.)

JOHNNY
 AH. Fuck. *(Less disoriented)* Jesus, what's your problem?

STEVEN
 You called me at one in the morning so you could show me how high you are?

JOHNNY
 What the fuck? No, you ass hole I'm dead serious. We need to find my brother.

STEVEN
 It's not funny, Johnny, cut it out.

JOHNNY
 Do you see giggles? Do you see laughing? I need your help.

STEVEN
 With what?!

JOHNNY
 Shhh! Keep your voice down!

STEVEN
 There's no one here!!

JOHNNY

You're still being real fuckin' loud kid, I have neighbors too.

STEVEN

(Over it) I'm going to my place.

(STEVEN starts to exit, JOHNNY intercepts)

JOHNNY

Woahwoahwoahwoah wait, wait, hold up! Are you for real?

STEVEN

This is ridiculous.

JOHNNY

Ridiculous?

STEVEN

Christ, Johnny, I have a test in the morning, I'm exhausted enough.

JOHNNY *(Aggressive)*

Trying to find my brother is ridiculous?

(Comes closer to STEVEN and he slightly backs away)

Huh? I called you thinking you'd be a FUCK ton different than the rest of'um, no, you're one of'um. Good to know my best friend is a fuckin' sheep.

STEVEN

I can't believe you're being serious right now, do you hear yourself? Like, really, are listening to the words you're saying? You need to sit down // and think —

JOHNNY

There's no time to sit! No time to think! Longer we wait, the more likely he's dead.

STEVEN

I cannot believe this is happening. You're freaking // me out —

JOHNNY

Fuck you, man. Some friend you are. Can't take me seriously.

STEVEN

Well if you'd...

(stops a moment to think, reels back)

if you weren't high, Johnny, // I'd take you more seriously.

JOHNNY

I'm not high you fuckin' dick.

(STEVEN grabs his arm, revealing a few red dots)

Get off me man!

(He escapes his clutch)

STEVEN
What is that? Huh?

JOHNNY
Old, that's what it is.

STEVEN
And your hand! What happened to your hand?

JOHNNY
I punched my wall earlier, so what? I do that anyway.

(After a slight pause, STEVEN looks around then speed walks to JOHNNYS room. JOHNNY follows, telling him to stop. STEVEN locks the door and JOHNNY bangs on it. Not too long after, the door opens and STEVEN walks out with needles and bags filled with heroin)

JOHNNY
Fuck you, guy.

STEVEN
You're fucking high, Johnny. Go to the bathroom, wash yourself off, and go to bed.

JOHNNY
Fuck you.

STEVEN
You're saying shit you're not understanding, shit you wouldn't say if you were sober // and you know —

JOHNNY
I'd do it sober too, Steve, so fuck you.

(Johnny walks to the couch and sits. STEVE tries to keep his cool)

STEVEN
(*Holds himself from saying anything*) It's almost two in the morning. We have a test tomorrow.

JOHNNY
I don't plan on studying for it anyway.

(STEVEN finds JOHNNYS Sweatshirt on the floor, he picks it up.)

STEVEN

Well, I have a test tomorrow. Come down from your high and tomorrow we can talk about it, ok?

(Gives sweatshirt to JOHNNY who reluctantly takes it, doesn't put it on.)

JOHNNY

Well now I'm tired, so thanks.

STEVEN

Good. You should be. It's late.

JOHNNY

I don't want to be tired. I'm hopped up, I need to go out.

STEVEN

You shouldn't

JOHNNY

Can't you just drive around just for a bit?

STEVEN

God, Johnny it's getting late, you shouldn't go out like this.

JOHNNY

I'm not crazy. I'm not. I know you think I am but I'm not.

STEVEN

I don't think you're // crazy —

JOHNNY

Oh, piss off, don't lie to me, whenever I get high you're always on a high horse.

STEVEN

Dude, I'm just trying to look after you.

JOHNNY

I'm not a child, Steve, I'm not your fucking son.

STEVEN

I never said you were.

JOHNNY

You imply it. The way you speak to me, all of a sudden I can't sign my own permission slips without your signature.

(Pause)

STEVEN

Why did your parents leave?

JOHNNY

Because they stopped caring about James too. He's gone, they kept saying, but I wanted to find him! They kept —

STEVEN

Oh God.

JOHNNY

— Trying to ... Don't "oh God" me, you're losing out on me too, I know you are. I know I can do it, I just needed some help but they left, now I need your help and you're being an asshole too.

STEVEN

Johnny. Johnny, listen to me.

(Sits on the couch)

This is getting bad, pal. You're-You're not doing well.

JOHNNY

I'm doing fine, pal, I'm living.

STEVEN

You're skating on thin ice. I've been trying to tell you this all year, you have to get help.

JOHNNY

(*Defensive, shuts down*) I don't need help, Steve.

STEVEN

You do.

JOHNNY

Fuck you.

STEVEN

Your parents left you here to yourself, don't you see what you're doing?

JOHNNY

Fuck them! Fuck you and fuck them! How 'bout that? It's my fault they left, right? They aren't adults who can make their own decisions. Get the fuck out of here with that stupid shit.

STEVEN

Look, I'm just trying to help you look at this differently, you don't have to get pissy with me.

JOHNNY

Oh, my bad, I'm so sorry I'm rusting your shining armor, Mister clean-ex over here.

STEVEN

Don't be an asshole.

JOHNNY

I'm the asshole. Yep. That's me. It's Mister asshole and mister clean-ex.

STEVEN

I'm going to bed.

(He gets up)

It's already too late to finish studying.

JOHNNY

Kill me, why dontcha? Then you can study your ass off all you want.

STEVEN

Go to bed Johnny. Text me in the morning please.

JOHNNY

Whatever, man,

(gets up and throws his sweatshirt on the floor)

I'll just fucking drive myself.

STEVEN

How are you gonna do that when you don't have a car?

JOHNNY

I'll use yours.

(He moves closer to STEVEN)

STEVEN

Go to bed man, please.

(JOHNNY attempts to grab the lanyard from STEVENS pocket. STEVEN struggles to hold onto it.)

STEVEN

The hell are you doing?!

JOHNNY

He'll be dead if I don't find him!

(JOHNNY gets the keys and is about to go through the front door, STEVEN grabs onto JOHNNY and tries to drag him back. STEVEN grabs the keys and goes to the front door. JOHNNY attempts to take the keys again, another

struggle and then JOHNNY gets them. STEVEN posts himself in front of the door)

	JOHNNY
You're getting on my nerves, kid.	
	STEVEN
Go to bed, Johnny.	
	JOHNNY
<i>(Tense)</i> Get out of my way...	
	STEVEN
Go to bed Johnny!	
	JOHNNY
Get out of my way!	
	STEVEN
Just go to bed!	
	JOHNNY
No!	
	(Takes breath to relax, not enough to work)
I'm leaving this fuckin' house!	
	STEVEN
You'll have to kill me to get through.	
	JOHNNY
Fuck OFF STEVE.	
	STEVEN
Go to bed!	
	JOHNNY
JUST MOVE OUT OF MY WAY!	
	STEVEN
NO!	

(JOHNNY tries pushing STEVE but STEVE pushes him back. Pissed, JOHNNY punches STEVE in the stomach and STEVE kneels to hold himself. JOHNNY gets to the door when STEVE tackles him. THEY roll on the floor and fight. At the end, JOHNNY is straddled over STEVE. repeatedly punching him. Eventually gets tired and has more blood on his knuckles. Once at the last breath he can muster up, he realizes he might have killed STEVE. He

picks himself up and looks at STEVE, on the floor. He looks around.)

JOHNNY:

Get up, man. (Nothing. Hoarse) Com'on man...(He stumbles, walking around the living room.) James...James where are ya? (Walks around more.) James?! Fuck, James! James!

(He walks out of the house, still yelling. A car door opens, shuts, then an engine roars and wheels out. As the lights dim slowly, we hear a voice)

VOICE

In today's news, East Ville High School All Star, Johnathan Goodman, found lifeless in deadly car crash. Police reports he drove late last night high on heroin and crashed into a tree. Investigators point out that they found paraphernalia inside his home as well as the body of another East Ville High School student, Steven Wright, who was allegedly beaten to death by Jonathan. Johnathan will be laid next to his brother, James Goodman, who died last year from gang violence. Rebecca Flynn has more on the story. (Blackout.)

Epistles of Justice

Tuesday, 30th of January, 220 P.A.

A wonderful way to start a journal. Mother and Father told me that these are rare things. A trader brought it into town and said it was from the Old World. I've noticed that all things in the Old World are broken and torn, and yet the condition of this journal is magnificent. The scorch marks on the leather actually complements the book. They told me it was an expensive gift, so this was also my graduation gift. They thought it to be the perfect gift on my journey, and thought if I were to be alone I'd put my thoughts on the paper.

I am excited yet remorseful to leave my little town. I've asked my parents if leaving is such a good idea, and whether I could continue my practice in my own town. I don't think they liked that idea. My Father sat me down and spoke to me about it.

"I have lived in this town since I was born," he said. "Most of us have. What you're doing is not only beneficial for this land, but for God. Though not as thriving and resourceful as ours, there are more towns out there who need God, who need you to teach them God. Sin is among us, my boy, and you can help fight it back."

His words connected with me. I should have known that Father was always right.

I must go back to the church before I go. They have manuscripts for me to take on the journey. What I'm elated with the most is that they told me along with the clerical books I need to study, I could also pick any other book in their possession I'd want to take with me. I'd made my bed with one on this town's history, so that I always have a piece of it with me wherever I go.

Wednesday, January 31st

I have been traveling on a wagon for the last few hours. The group has been reduced by one person. Their heads are down, staring into the wood. I remember how much joy our faces exposed, how scared and excited we were to venture to the unknown, and now there is silence.

I didn't know Matthew well, but seeing him destroy all he worked for was just as disheartening, if not more, to see him not join our trip. He had an oath to God and to this town, and it was the right thing for me to report him. I was more worried that they would crucify him, but God has a path for everyone, and he won't let his children conform to sin. I will be praying for him every day.

I wanted to write something before it gets dark. I've heard the Wastes become an impenetrable darkness, it becomes dangerous. Earlier I asked the wagon driver how long he thought we had until we found a town. He just answered with a mumble. My Mother and Father told me he was a very experienced driver. We were lucky to have such a man with his knowledge of the land.

At least I've written a bit. It's good to write out a day. I'm still nervous, but God will never let me down. He is my saving grace and light. Maybe I can suggest to the group to do a prayer for Matthew before we sleep.

Friday, February 2nd

We've been talking to each other more since we left. I've made lots of conversation with one of the boys. His name is James. He's very nice, and was very devoted to his

studies but he has said some sinful things. He wanted my opinion on our town's tradition of crucifying criminals as punishment. I told him I thought of it as a sacrifice, to give our bad to God so he could excel our good. He said it mainly stems from our lack of resources, so we throw away who we deem bad, so we can benefit who we deem good. He then proceeded to give me a run down on how he only studied theology and clerical studies I loved just so he can escape the town. I never expected this from someone like him. His father is a very respected member of our town, and an important figure to our church.

But then I realized that this journey may provide him a spiritual cleanse. I think he has grown a corrupted way of thinking while living in our town, and for him to have hands on experience with helping people without Jesus and God in their lives will fill a hole inside him and he will see God for who He is and what He does! I will try to grow close with him, and try not to judge him for whatever actions he may make. He walks a path of God, he just needs to realize it.

The driver said we were a day and a half away from a town. This will be our first encounter with the outside world. Some of us might stay and some might press on. Tomorrow is a big day for me and James.

Monday

James waits for me to walk with him around town. I will take this as an opportunity to convince him to stay on God's path. But yesterday was a very productive day. We participated in the town's Mass, which wasn't much. I can tell by some of the looks from

my group that a few would love to help these people find God's light. I am off to go find James.

Tuesday 6th

I have bathed and prayed as much as I could and still I feel dirty. I feel sin crawling up my skin and up through my teeth, out my eyes. It has formed tears.

I feel nothing but guilt, how I almost gave to temptation. A woman. A beautiful woman who set herself apart from the other whores, came to me, talked to me, and to think, I almost gave in. To think I could save James from his madness, he is corrupted with sin. To think that there were other boys apart of our program who would die to journey with us and for him to abuse it. The establishment he took us was unforgivable.

I know a kiss is not the same as copulation but these are actions taken by devoted married men and women. We leave tomorrow. I have no power in telling the rest of my group. They have grown fond of him and wouldn't weigh my word over his. He would deny it too. He's the incarnation of the serpent of Eden!

I cannot allow him to join our journey any longer. As I write he is off in bed with a woman.

Maybe it isn't him that needs saving. Maybe it's the rest of the town that needs saving from the likes of him. It has become clear that saving is not efficient enough.

Wednesday

I did it for God. The waste will darken soon. My heart feels dark. I must find the light.

???????

I have forgotten how many days have passed, and the blood has dried on my clothes. Not writing in my journal has weighed on me since I took off. Because it's daylight, I can stop the wagon and just relax. I haven't eaten anything in so long because I just needed to go. The wagon is much lighter. Travel has become easier, but the blood still remains. I hope to find somewhere that will take me in. I'll have to find a way to explain the blood.

Ideas:

- Injury
- Animal Blood (Sacrificed to God)
- Bandit attack (escaped)

Friday

I have made shelter in a town called Lake Jordan. It is a quiet town, but a town without God. They graciously took me in, and I sense they hunger a reason to live. This town is full of sin and they don't realize it. They need God's help.

What I find miraculous is how clean their Lake is. I think this is the place where I was meant to be. There is a beautiful plant that grows by the lake, but the Mythos of this town says it grew right after the attack on the Old World, and people are afraid to touch

it. I offered to examine the plant and study it. They are very interested in my stories and teachings. They want to know more about Jesus and God. This town has potential in being a community devoted to Him, just like my home town. There is a rather old church by the lake that has been used for housing. This is where I can make my mark. It starts with remodeling that church and creating a program to teach Lake Jordan of Jesus's lessons, to implement it into their everyday life. I will teach them how sacrificing the sinned to God will allow Him to help us in our need, to keep this town clean.

Lake Plant Study:

Turning plant into a liquid causes the user to become increasingly obedient. This will prove useful.

GOOD FRIDAY

An Apocalyptic Tragedy

by

Remson DeJoseph

CHARACTERS

Principle

JUDICAR	Lake Jordans most respected church official.
JACOB WOODSMITH	Another respected member of Lake Jordan. Runs his own carpenter business.
LEWIE WRIGHTMAN	A young teenager, member of the resistance. African American.
MARGARET WOODSMITH	Married to Jacob
LIAM WOODSMITH	Nephew of Jacob, child of John. Has Aspergers.
JOHN WOODSMITH	Jacobs Brother, member of the resistance.

Ensemble

ENSEMBLE MAN 1
 ENSEMBLE MAN 2
 ENSEMBLE WOMAN 1
 ENSEMBLE WOMAN 2

Roles:

MAN 1	Mr. Howl. (Played by Ensemble Woman 1)
MAN 2	Mr. Kent. (Played by Ensemble Woman 2)
COUNCIL MEMBER 1 2	Members of the Lake Jordan Council. (Played by Ensemble Man 1 and 2)
COUNCIL WOMAN	The only woman member of the Council. (Played by Ensemble Woman 1)
CUSTOMER	(Played by Ensemble man 1)
SHADY WOMAN	(Played by Ensemble man 2)
PARTY GOERS	(Played Ensemble man 1 and 2)
MYSTERIOUS MAN	(Played Ensemble man 2)
WAITRESS	(Played Ensemble woman 2)
WOMAN	The woman in the manor. (Played Ensemble woman 1)
PRIEST	Follower of New Christianity, with hoods to hide their faces. Everyone will play all the priests.

SETTING

The Town of Lake Jordan. On both down stage right and left, the half of two houses are set. They are a dark brown, worn out. Around them both half of a white fence, and a mailbox in the corner of the fences. All set pieces for other scenes will be bits and pieces to relay where we are in the scene, and the two houses will live on the stage the whole act.

TIME

200 years after America was bombed.

AUTHORS NOTE.

A line of dialogue with a (//) in it indicates the spot where the following line starts. A (—) as the end of a line indicates an interruption.

ACT [1]

SCENE [1]

(The town of Lake Jordan. A Christian town. Some would think it to be more Neo-Christianity but they would have been the people who didn't survive the bombing. It is one of the only thriving towns in America, where every year on Good Friday, they give to Jesus Christ to replenish their harvest and, most importantly, purify their lake. Every year, by the grace of God, their harvest is replenished and their lake pure. It is neither a big town nor a small one. It is simply Lake Jordan, a town with houses to dwell, shops to buy from, and a beloved church which lives beside the Lake.)

(It is the morning of Good Friday)

(The stage is dark, it envelops the room and sits still for too long. A bright spot drops upon the JUDICAR. He is wearing black robes with a hood. He lets his hood down and smiles. It is calm and warm. He is about to give a speech)

JUDICAR

People of Lake Jordan, Good Mornin' to y'all and may Jesus Christ save ya.

(A whispered "amen" is heard.)

(Warmly and relaxed) As we approach the cleansin' day and Easter Sunday, I'd like to tell y'all of my mornin', and I had lots of thinkin' goin' on. And on this mornin' I thought, of course, of Jesus and his noble sacrifice he made so many years ago. A humble carpenter was made into a figure of importance. And on this mornin', I thought how many years ago he died for all our sins. How time has passed and we cannot forget his holy name.

And on this mornin' I thought about how God had swept his mighty hand throughout the world and purged the sinners from his earth, and how he gave us one more chance to love and care his name. So I am grateful for this gift of life. His hand extended out in guidance, and extended out in understandin', just like how God made humankind the rainbow from the flood. And on this mornin' I was thinkin' what exactly did we do to give Him thanks? When Jesus died for all our sins, what did we do to give Him thanks?

(After this line, behind the JUDICAR we see a dim light appear revealing a wall. LEWIE with a cloth

over his face, spray paints on the wall with red:
GOD IS DEAD)

(JUDICAR)

We didn't do a single thing. How hard is it to give a simple thank you to our lord? Was this why Lord almighty slayed us all those years ago? That's why I was so sad this mornin'. It really shades me blue to think how we could fail our mighty Lord. But I don't live my days in sadness any more. When I am with our Lord, the sky is bright, the clouds are full, and I am strengthened by His grace. Our Lord has chosen weak from strong to keep his vision so. All those who wake here on Good Friday, the husbands and wives, their children alike, who pray each night, repent their sins, all've you are chosen by our Lord.

And on this mornin' I was thinkin' of better ways to please our God. How else can we say thanks to Him? In fact, I've been thinkin' of this for months.

(Two priest run on stage and catch LEWIE,
restraining him.)

(With vigor) Well, this mornin, my worries vanished. We are so immensely blessed upon this Good Friday havin' not one lamb, but three. All three have given themselves to be renewed, have given their lives to aid us in our future, to cleanse our waters and our crops, to prove that God will always win. And they the lambs of God ask for forgiveness, in the name of the father, in the name of the son, and in name of the holy ghost.

CROWD

Amen!

JUDICAR

Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday to y'all. May Jesus Christ keep you all clean. (Black out)

ACT [1]

SCENE [2]

(Afternoon)

(Meeting room of the Town Council, Lake Jordans Government. A long table centers stage. COUNCIL MEMBER (ENSEMBLE MAN 1), COUNCIL MEMBER 2 (ENSEMBLE MAN 2), COUNCIL WOMAN (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 1),

JACOB and the JUDICAR (who is wearing white Robes) enter the stage. When the lights are up, COUNCIL WOMAN is already standing.)

COUNCIL WOMAN

With the supply of buckets made by Councilman Woodsmith, I think this year's cleansing will go off to a fantastic start.

JUDICAR

Thank you, Mrs. Taylor, what a special way to start this year's Easter. With pure water and crops, I believe this Sunday will be one of the best Easter Sundays we've had yet.

(A clap for COUNCIL WOMAN as she stands, smiles, then sits.)

JUDICAR

Sunday is also the Academy choir concert, which will be led by Mr. Learner, (*pointing to COUNCIL MEMBER*) I can say for all of us, we look forward to seeing that. I think this week we should all think about the gifts God has given to us all. I think we can adjourn here, are there any questions?

(No questions.)

God bless you all, have a great rest of the month! And Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday!

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday!

(They all sit up and walk away, JACOB walks towards the JUDICAR)

JACOB

Your Honor, I was wondering if I could speak with you.

JUDICAR

Yes, I am on my way to my office right now, do you mind if we walk and talk?

JACOB

Not at all! I prefer a good old walk anyway

(They walk around the stage while the office sets up:)

(The Judicars Office, a desk of the JUDICAR and a few book shelves behind with a small quantity of books.)

JUDICAR

Now I hope you don't mind my pryin' but I didn't see you at todays sacrifice, Mr. Woodsmith. Was everythin' okay?

JACOB

(Nervous) Apologies, your Honor, I overslept. Long night. Took forever to make those crosses. Especially three, you know?

JUDICAR

Yes, understandable. My request was rather odd, but your crosses were most exquisite. The craftsmanship that went into each one, I know, makes Jesus proud, and I couldn't help but hear the folks in the crowd praise your work again. You've grown a name for yourself, Mr. Woodsmith. The cleanse tomorrow will prove to be most extravagant.

JACOB

I feel most guilty, your Honor, to have missed such an event.

JUDICAR

Oh, nonsense, Mr. Woodsmith, God too, rested on the seventh day. He will forgive your absence for your beautiful pieces dedicated to his name.

JACOB

Thank you, your Honor, but it wasn't just me who made those, can't take all the credit.

JUDICAR

Oh? What do you mean?

JACOB

Well, Liam has been working with me when he would come home. It's a blessing having him by my side.

JUDICAR

Isn't that lovely. He often talks about workin' in the woodshop with you.

(By now they have reached the office, they enter the room.)

(JUDICAR)

Now, what was it that you needed Mr. Woodsmith?

JACOB

Actually, it's in regards to Liam. I was wondering...how is he doing? Is he behaving?

JUDICAR

(Sullenly) I am seein' overall improvement with him but he has been havin' those outings.

JACOB

Yes, I am so sorry about what happened during mass the other day...I -

JUDICAR

It was only once. He is young, and when he makes a big mistake, he learns from it. But his smaller mistakes don't seem to have the same attention.

JACOB

Well, you give him any punishment you see fit. He must learn, and if he is improving, than I am happy.

(A priest walks into the office interrupting)

PRIEST

Your honor --

JUDICAR

A moment, father.

PRIEST

Your honor I must speak to you --

JUDICAR

Father, I am in conversation.

PRIEST

Its of the utmost // importance --

JUDICAR

(Annoyed) Alright, spit it out son, what is it?

PRIEST

It would be best if we spoke *privately*.

(JACOB is curious, JUDICAR notices)

JUDICAR

Whatever you have to say to me, you can say in front of Mr. Woodsmith. After all, God hears everything, secrets are minuscule to our savior.

PRIEST

(Stuck, but) Very well... One of the suspects of the church scandal was caught today.

(JUDICAR realizes what was said in front of JACOB)

JUDICAR

Thank you, father, I will meet you at the cells.

(Father bows then leaves)

JACOB

Church scandal? Your Honor, is everything alright?

JUDICAR

Yes, everythin's fine, I ... There was an incident at the church a few days ago, pews with graffiti on them, the back door pried open. The suspects are believed to be part of a youth organization, supposedly formed at the academy, and I am guessin' we caught one in action today.

JACOB

Today?! Of all days.

JUDICAR

It's a shame, Mr. Woodsmith.

JACOB

My goodness. Why would anyone do that to the church?

JUDICAR

That I will find out soon enough.

JACOB

Your Honor, if I may, why wasn't the council notified of it? Or the town? Surely, we would have done something about it!

JUDICAR

Your right to question it, Mr. Woodsmith, but it was the matter of evidence and holiday, for the town to know about this heinous crime only

(JUDICAR)

a few days before Easter and Good Friday, it would kill spirits. And if we had no leads on why such a disaster would happen and who did it, chaos would ensue. I don't want fingers to be pointed at around here. Justice will serve us by law and by God. But now that we have a suspect, we can let the town know of the actions.

JACOB

So when will you think this will go public?

JUDICAR

We will see after we speak to our friend. *(Thinks for a moment)* Mr. Woodsmith, I trust you won't tell anyone of this. I only do this for the better of God's children.

JACOB

No your Honor, I won't say a word. I trust whatever judgement and whenever it is passed on these criminals will be for the better of Jesus's name.

JUDICAR

You are a true man of God, Mr. Woodsmith. Follow me, lets go speak to our friend together, I would like to know what you think of the situation.

JACOB

Me? You want me to come with you?

JUDICAR

You prove yourself to be loyal to not only God, but the people of Lake Jordan, and your input would be most valuable.

JACOB

Well, certainly, I'd love to join you!

JUDICAR

Then let us go, Mr. Woodsmith.

(They exit out the office..)

(The office changes to the Church Basement Jail Cell. A PRIEST comes on stage with a chair, and LEWIE a young man, African American, enters with him. LEWIE sits with hands tied behind his back)

(JACOB and JUDICAR enter stage right)

JUDICAR

Stay here, Mr. Woodsmith.

(The JUDICAR walks over to the chair, once he gets closer, LEWIE looks up, angry.)

PRIEST

Your Honor, I found this young man by the church this morning defacing it with --

JUDICAR

Let the boy speak, father. Let him explain.

LEWIE

I did nothin' wrong man.

PRIEST

You will address the Judicar as your Honor, boy.

JUDICAR

Father, please. Let him speak his mind.

LEWIE

You call this crime? Paint on a wall, thats what crime is to you? Man, y'all are fucked in the head.

(The PRIEST begins to speak up but the JUDICAR silences him.)

Nah, he's right, I shouldn't say fucked, you're hypocrites, liars. Murderers. The crimes you've committed against the people today is sin on its own yet you apprehend me, tied to a chair, disrespect my people because I painted a wall. Fuck you.

JUDICAR

(Thinking) Father, what did he paint on the church?

LEWIE

I'll tell you myself, I wrote God is dead. God is dead and YOU killed him, your honor. *(Spits in his face)*

(JACOB reels back in horror: how could anyone do that? JUDICAR wipes his face.)

JUDICAR

Jacob, (*beckons him*) come.

(JACOB does so)

This is where I could use your help. (*To Lewie*) This is Mr. Woodsmith, a respectful member of our community.

LEWIE

Yeah, I know you. You make the crosses for these guys, right?

JACOB

Yes, that is my job for Good Friday.

LEWIE

(*Chuckles*) You're no better than these assholes in robes. If I can ask you something, mister, why do you go along with this murder?

JACOB

(*Stunned*) I go with it because Jesus did it for us, and God kept you, me, and everyone you love alive all these years. I do it for his honor, his name, his love, because he did it for me. Sacrifices have to be made.

LEWIE

You have a son?

JACOB

No, me and my wife --

LEWIE

Your wife, say she was sentenced to be crucified and now you have to make the cross she hangs on.

JACOB

My wife would never commit a crime high enough to be considered // for death

LEWIE

I AM SITTING IN THIS CHAIR ON MY DEATH BED BECAUSE I PAINTED ON A WALL.

JUDICAR

Enough...

LEWIE

My brother was murdered today // because he was a --

JUDICAR

(Angry) That is enough! Your brother committed crimes against the church, he knew the consequences of his actions, and instead of dying by law, he died for Jesus. He chose to be a lamb, that is the difference between murder and honorable sacrifice, Mr. Wrightman

LEWIE

He would never do that to our mama!

JUDICAR

We have written documents, signing his consent to the sacrifice. He died for God and for the health of the members of this town. *(Calming down)* Young man, he died knowin' his soul will cleanse the rivers, the food, so that you and everyone he loves could live longer. Would you like to see the proof?

LEWIE

No, it doesn't matter now.

JACOB

If I may, your Honor. *(To Lewie)* What is your name, son?

LEWIE

Lewie. Lewie Wrightman

JACOB

Lewie, what the Judicar says is true. Only those who consent and sign an official document can be lambs. I don't doubt the church will do whatever it can to reform the situation, change your thinking, help you.

(Pause. LEWIE looks away and says nothing)

You have a bright future ahead of you, a future with God. You can repent, you can change. *(Still no answer)*

JUDICAR

What do you think, Mr. Woodsmith?

JACOB

I would give him time to think about his crimes, he's admitted to them, he can turn around.

JUDICAR

I believe the same. Now I have more questionin' to do. Mr. Woodsmith.

JACOB

Of course, your Honor, Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday.

(JUDCIAR bows, smiling, and before JACOB can leave:)

LEWIE

You asked about my future, Mr. Woodsmith. (JACOB stops walking) You say its bright, like you know. Well, I see it too sir. I see my bright future. (JACOB smiles, like he made an impact) I see it on your cross, I see my body burning, and I see the crowd of people praising at my charred flesh. That's what my future holds. I'll see you later, Mr. Woodsmith.

(JACOB is disturbed and he leaves, black out.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [3]

(Two Corner houses)

(Two men, MAN 1 (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 1) and MAN 2 (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 2) walk out of their house to the mail boxes to get the papers. They spot each other, very cheerful, old sport speak)

MAN 1

Ah! Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday Mr. Kent

MAN 2

Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday, Mr. Howl

MAN 1

Lovely weather, don't you say?

MAN 2

Loveliest it can be! God smiles on us today!

MAN 1

Mr. Kent, I concur to the highest!

(They laugh. Man 2 picks up the paper)

MAN 1

What's the news, Mr. Kent?

MAN 2

Mr. Howl, it says here that a young man has been charged with breaking into the church and stealing the wine chalice! *(Reads more)* It appears priests have returned the chalice back into the church for the cleansing. Marvelous, God is

(MAN 2)

good. *(Keeps reading)* The boys trial will be heard later this month and will be considered as a lamb for next years Good Friday. I hope he finds the light, Mr. Howl.

MAN 1

Indeed, Mr. Kent. It breaks my heart to hear such behavior. God finds his way to everyone, so I have no doubts.

MAN 2

No doubts indeed, Mr. Howl. Well, I better be off to the wife, we are preparing for the cleanse tomorrow. I'll see you there, Mr. Howl?

MAN 1

Mr. Kent, don't be a fool, I'll be there quicker than a cat!

(They chuckle)

Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday, Mr. Kent.

MAN 2

Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday to you Mr. Howl.

(MAN 1 picks up his paper, they exit the same time back to their houses. BLACK OUT)

ACT [1]

SCENE [4]

(The Woodsmith House and Shop. The house is made up of a table stage right, three chairs. The shop consists of a counter and a shelf of wood items. On the counter is a wooden horse and wood shavings. The

house and shop are separated and the shop is dark.)

(MARGARET, loving wife of Jacob sets up the table for dinner. Putting down wood plates, wood cups, she hums a hymn while doing so. After humming for some time.)

MARGARET

(To off stage) Liam, dear! Come help me with the table.

(She continues to set up, no answer.)

Liam! I am not your maid, you will come down here and help me set up!

(A knock SR. Surprises MARGARET.)

(MAGARET)

Dear...*(to knocking)* Coming!

(She leaves to open the door.)

MARGARET

(Off stage) Liam! What...*(crying from LIAM)* oh, no tears, hun, come with me.

(They enter back into the house. LIAM, Jacob and Margarets nephew who just turned 19 years old, is under her arms, crying)

LIAM

I...I don't like being locked out. I don't like it.

MARGARET

Why were you outside to begin with?

LIAM

I...I just wanted to craft stuff. I want to craft for you, for Uncle Jake.

MARGARET

Were you in the workshop, Liam?

LIAM

I wanna make a horse. I like horses. Remember when we saw one a few months ago?

MARGARET

(Strict) Liam...you answer me right now. Were you in the workshop?

(LIAM tenses, then cries)

Liam, no time to be a child. You're an adult, right?

LIAM

Please don't get mad at me, please!!

MARGARET

I only get mad at liars and children. What are you? Are you a liar and a child?

LIAM

(Ending his crying) No...I'm...I'm honest and an adult.

MARGARET

You're an honest man?

LIAM

Honest, Honest man, Aunt Margaret. No children live here.

MARGARET

So I won't yell, just tell me where you were.

LIAM

(Still nervous) I...I got into the shop, I was working // on a horse --

MARGARET

How did you get in from your room?

LIAM

(More scared) I..I climbed down the window.

MARGARET

Are you a monkey?

LIAM

(Offended) No! I'm not a monkey!

MARGARET

So why did you climb?

LIAM

I!...I really wanted to make a horsey, honest.

MARGARET

You don't climb from your window in the church, do you?

LIAM

No I don't! I...I...I just wanted to make a horse, I've been thinking about it all week. I said when I come home for Easter weekend, I'm gonna make a horse for Aunt Margaret and Uncle Jake.

MARGARET

Liam, you know you aren't supposed use the tools without Uncle Jacob. And I've told you plenty of times to never climb your window.

LIAM

But...but...

MARGARET

No buts. I only do it to protect you. You can hurt yourself! People don't like climbers. Remember what we said?

LIAM

(Reciting) Climbing is for monkeys and no one wants monkeys.

MARGARET

Uncle Jacob is due home any time soon. Make sure you let him know you went in.

LIAM

Okay. *(Pause)* I'm sorry, Aunty. Honest. I'm sorry

MARGARET

(Holding LIAM) Hush, it's all right. We all make mistakes. God forgives those who make mistakes.

LIAM

Even my mistakes?

MARGARET

Yes, especially your mistakes. He knows you're a young and healthy man. Do you love God?

LIAM

Yea! I do!

MARGARET

He loves you too. Now do me a favor, go back outside and get me the mail then we can finish setting up the table.

LIAM

Ok! I'll get the mail! I'll get the mail!

(LIAM runs out the way he came in. MARGARET fixes table while hes away, but not for too long because he comes back soon.)

LIAM

You got a letter, and Uncle Jake has two!!

MARGARET

I'll take those hun, go get the dishes.

(He runs off to another room. She shuffles through the letters and finds one of her interest. She puts the other ones down and looks at it, she opens the letter and begins to read it. She's in disgust)

Good heavens! This is getting ridiculous.

(She tears the letter when LIAM enters with wood forks and knives and sees her upset.)

LIAM

Is everything okay?

MARGARET

(Surprised) Yes, dear. Just...these letters.

LIAM

Is it the bad man again? Did he hurt Uncle Jacob.

MARGARET

No dear, the bad man keeps sending him letters. Hun, if you ever see a letter that's only written to Uncle Jacob, no other names on it or anything, you throw it in the fire. Understand?

LIAM

I understand. I don't want Uncle Jacob to get hurt, I like making stuff with him.

MARGARET

That's a good man. Now, throw these bits in the fire for me, and grab some water from the tub.

(MARGARET gives LIAM the torn letter.)

LIAM

Ok! Throw the bits and get the water. I'll grab the water from the tub.

(LIAM walks CENTER DOWN, over the edge of the stage, he kneels down and throws the bits in the fire. The fire grows slightly and he smiles. He walks back to the table and takes a bucket and begins to walk out USL but then stops.)

LIAM

(*Nervous*) Aunt Margaret...

MARGARET

(*While setting up*) Yes, dear?

LIAM

Will-I can go to the cleanse tomorrow, can't I?

MARGARET

(*She stops what shes doing*) You have to watch the house tomorrow, remember?

LIAM

But...but I want to fetch water from the lake. I want to do it this year, with you, or with Uncle Jacob.

MARGARET

(*Strict*) Liam, I need you to watch the house tomorrow and thats final.

(He stops speaking and leaves behind the shop.
MARGARET continues to set up. A knock at the door. She goes to get it.)

Ah! Joe, Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday.

COUNCIL MEMBER

Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday to you, Margaret

MARGARET

Please, come in, come in.

(COUNCIL MEMBER (ENSEMBLE MAN 1)
enters the house)

COUNCIL MEMBER

Has Jacob come back yet? I thought I would see him here.

MARGARET

No, not at the moment, he should be returning soon. Is everything okay?

COUNCIL MEMBER

I was gonna' ask that myself. I didn't see him at the sacrifice earlier but he came to the meeting --

MARGARET

Oh, yes. He was terribly tired.

COUNCIL MEMBER

Ah, of course. I figured. Beautiful crosses he made, I thought I'd stop by to congratulate him on his beautiful work.

MARGARET

Well, it was him and Liam. Worked very hard on those pieces.

COUNCIL MEMBER

He's a smart boy. Is he home for Easter?

MARGARET

Yes I just picked him up this morning. He's learning so much from the church, we are very blessed that the Judicar took him in.

COUNCIL MEMBER

Yes that was very nice of the Judicar. He's teaching a fine young man. Nothing like his father, thank the Lord.

MARGARET

Yes, praise him.

(Pause)

COUNCIL MEMBER

Does he...

MARGARET

What?

COUNCIL MEMBER

(trying to find the right words) Does he still have those...

MARGARET

No, not often anymore. It's only in public places where it gets bad. Sometimes his fits only last 30 seconds, maybe a minute. But he calms down. He's getting better...

COUNCIL MEMBER

Yes. *(Pause)* I'm sorry Margaret, you must understand why...

MARGARET

It's alright Joe, it was months ago, I have moved on, Jacob has moved on. It would be a distraction for the other kids. Can't have that kind of distraction in the Academy.

COUNCIL MEMBER

And he must be learning from the church or getting something from working with Jacob, right?

MARGARET

Yes, of course. And honestly, I think its for the best. Why, I just caught him sneaking out into the shop to work on his own!

COUNCIL MEMBER

Wow, how amazing. He must really love it. Bless him.

MARGARET

I know you're not here to just check on Jacob. What did you really come here for?

COUNCIL MEMBER

Well, I wanted to check if he had any more bowls in stock. Might need a little more for Sunday.

MARGARET

Is Sarah cooking something special?

COUNCIL MEMBER

This year is crazy. She's thinking of making the Easter Pie even bigger than the last!

MARGARET

No kidding! I remember when she dropped off a slice last year. Fed the house for a week on its own!

COUNCIL MEMBER

I hope you'll be coming down this time around. It was a shame you didn't come last year, it was a wonderful time.

MARGARET

Last year was very hectic, Joe.

COUNCIL MEMBER

Right...of course. No one would have batted an eye, Margaret, we all love Jacob. We know a fine man from a low one.

MARGARET

He was still his brother. After all those accusations, all the times he defended him, the man had the nerve to run away instead of owning up. He did Jacob wrong that...that bastard!

COUNCIL MEMBER

Margaret...

MARGARET

I'm sorry but it's so very frustrating, to see Jacob drown like that, drown in his own words. He left his son, and it's not fair for me. It's not fair for Liam, it's not fair for Jacob. We're doing the best we can to help the kid...it's getting harder and harder.

(As she finishes, JACOB enters through the front door, surprised to see COUNCIL MEMBER)

Oh, look! He's home, lovely. (*She kisses JACOB*) Joe came to see you.

JACOB

He's obviously looking for something he'll be able to bring home (*Laughs*)

COUNCIL MEMBER

(*Chuckles*) You and the misses are too smart for me. Need a bowl for tomorrow.

JACOB

Got plenty, come on, follow me.

(They exit SR. LIAM comes back on stage)

LIAM

I got the water Aunt Margaret! Just like you asked!

(He gives the bowl to MARGARET)

MARGARET

Thanks, dear. Let's set up the table.

(The lights dim, they set up the table, and the shop brightens. JACOB and COUNCIL MEMBER go into the shop)

COUNCIL MEMBER

Really, I mean it. Your best yet.

JACOB

(Jesting) You looking to get something for free? *(He goes to the shelves)*

COUNCIL MEMBER

(Walking around to the counter)

I have enough money to buy your entire stock if I wanted to!

JACOB

Right, I'm sure you do!

(They laugh)

COUNCIL MEMBER

I was talking to your wife about Sunday. You think you'll be there?

JACOB

I don't see why not. What should I bring?

COUNCIL MEMBER

Tell Margaret to make that cabbage soup of hers. Never can get enough of it. *(Sees the horse on the counter)* Whats this, Jacob? *(Picks it up)* Crafting children's toys now? Business ain't the best?

JACOB

Huh?

(JACOB walks over to COUNCIL member and sees the horse.)

What in heavens name is...*(sees saw dust on the counter)* Someone was in here!

COUNCIL MEMBER

Margaret was saying Liam snuck into the shop today.

JACOB

(Annoyed) That boy. I told him not to play with the tools when I wasn't around.

COUNCIL MEMBER

Relax, Jacob. Look at it. It's marvelous. For a minute, I really thought you crafted it.

(JACOB looks at it and holds it. He looks over the curves and figure.)

JACOB

I don't like him in here without me. Last thing I need is for him to...to hurt himself

COUNCIL MEMBER

You should sell it.

JACOB

Sell it?

COUNCIL MEMBER

Yeah. Sell it, give the money to Liam. Make something out of it, you can put him to work on this kind of stuff when he leaves the church.

JACOB

I don't think that'll ever happen. He's not capable of working alone.

(COUNCIL MEMBER looks at the horse and coughs.)

Not what I mean. What is he gonna' do if the shop gets crowded? He wouldn't handle himself

COUNCIL MEMBER

Then teach him. That's the best thing to do.

JACOB

(A little bitter) That's what I've been doing. You were no help.

COUNCIL MEMBER

(Sighing) Your wife moved on fine.

JACOB

It's...bothersome still. But you're right, it's over with. I'm sorry, Joe. At least he has the church. It's doing him well.

COUNCIL MEMBER

It's alright, Jacob. Now, I must ask, how come I got to your house faster than you?

JACOB

I stayed after to speak to the Judicar about Liam. And we talked for a little while.

COUNCIL MEMBER

And what did you two talk about?

JACOB

Just about Liam, how he's doing. He also said he noticed I didn't make the sacrifice. And we talked about what happened with the church...*(stops himself)*

COUNCIL MEMBER

Ah yes. That was rather sad to hear.

JACOB

(Confused) What?

COUNCIL MEMBER

The story in the papers today -

JACOB

Oh! Oh...yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER

What did you // think -

JACOB

No, thats what I was referring too.

COUNCIL MEMBER

Yes, I was gonna say how tragic it was to hear it coming from out own youth.

JACOB

Yes very tragic. The Judicar was very upset that a young man like that would do such a thing.

COUNCIL MEMBER

I hope he learns from this, its a very high crime of the church. They luckily found it.

JACOB
Found what?

COUNCIL MEMBER
The chalice the boy stole...

JACOB
He stole the chalice?

COUNCIL MEMBER
Did you hear something else?

JACOB
The Judicar only told me he...what did the paper say?

COUNCIL MEMBER
He broke into the church and stole the wine chalice.

JACOB
That must have been discovered after I left. That's a much bigger crime than breaking in.

COUNCIL MEMBER
My friend, I urge you to get rest, get sleep tonight.

JACOB
I will. Don't worry. Oh wait.

(He takes the bowl from behind his counter)
Your bowl.

COUNCIL MEMBER
Right...*(Fetches a wallet out of his pocket)*

JACOB
No, please. It's on me. Happy early Easter.

COUNCIL MEMBER
Jacob! I couldn't possibly-

JACOB
I will go rest, you will take this bowl. Give Sarah my best.

COUNCIL MEMBER
(Smiles) Will do. Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday, Jacob.

JACOB

Good Friday, Good Friday, Good Friday to you, Joe.

(as COUNCIL MEMBER EXITS, he runs into
LIAM)

COUNCIL MEMBER

Evening son.

LIAM

Is Uncle Jake in here?

COUNCIL MEMBER

Yes, he's by the counter. Lovely job on the cross today, mister. It was beautiful

LIAM

Thank you, Councilmen Lerner. I think it was my best yet!

(COUNCIL MEMBER laughs)

COUNCIL MEMBER

How splendid! The boy has confidence too!

(He exits. LIAM and JACOB are alone. LIAM
grows sullen when he sees JACOB and approaches
him to confess)

LIAM

Uncle Jake...Aunt Margaret told me to apologize...and --

JACOB

Liam. Did you make this?

LIAM

I did, I made it for you and Aunty. I like making stuff for you and Aunt Margaret.

JACOB

It was for us?

(LIAM nods his head.)

Promise me you won't do this again without my permission, alright?

(No answer)

Liam.

LIAM

I promise, Uncle Jake. I- I won't do it again. I'm sorry.

JACOB

I forgive you, Liam. I guess I rather you do this than anything else. Why don't we help Aunt Margaret with dinner?

LIAM

Okay!

(LIAM runs out, JACOB follows)

(BLACKOUT.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [5]

(The Next day)

(The stage is dark, before it swallows the stage completely a light is spotted upon the JUDICAR, In black robes, smiling warmly at the audience in front of him.)

JUDICAR

People of Lake Jordan, may Jesus be with you

CROWD

(Whispered) And also with you.

JUDICAR

There is an elephant in the room, he is big, gray, and mighty. As you know, crimes against the church were committed yesterday. A passionate crime against God. There was devastation, there was destruction, and there was sin. The Lord was gracious to our town and kept the damage small, that His holy home could be kept clean. All that was taken or destroyed has been returned, includin' the Chalice of the Christ. God is good.

CROWD

(Whispered) God is good.

(As the JUDICAR says the following, far stage, a man in the shadows comes to a mailbox of the WOODSMITHS and puts a letter in. He leaves)

JUDICAR

I realized two things, from this incident. . His holiness will always cleanse our sins, He will cleanse what is destroyed, He will cure what is most ill. This is a sure sign that our sacrifices yesterday were taken greatly by the Lord, and He will clear our waters and grow our crops. This year will be bountiful for our harvest and God is with us in our hearts, in our lake and in our feast. So when we say our thank you to our Lord, we know that He will give us more for all our service.

As for the person who wronged the church, I do not doubt that God will cleanse their soul from whatever plague fills the crevices. The cleanse may be for our food and drink, but let it be known that it cleanses our hearts, and makes us see true.

(A priest gives the JUDICAR an urn. The JUDICAR opens the lid)

So now we take the ash of sin, so God can purify our land.

(Holds Urn up to sky. Singing:)

JUDICAR

Come, now Lord, forgive us men.
Let Jesus rise our wealth again.
Let the Holy ghost release within
Let your children grow without sin
Amen, Amen.

CROWD

(Singing) Amen. Amen. Amen.

(As the crowd sings. The JUDICAR takes some of the ASH from the urn and throws it in the sky, it falls. He pours ash on his finger and makes a cross with it on his forehead. He joins the Amen with arms the sky.)

ALL

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

(Black out.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [6]

(In the Woodsmith house. MARGARET is frantic, cleaning and setting the table. LIAM enters and sees MARGARET cleaning.)

LIAM

I filled the tub like you said. The water looks so clean.

MARGARET

(Busy) Yes, dear. It sure is.

LIAM

I really wanna go next year, Aunt Margaret. I'd like to go with you and Uncle Jake.

MARGARET

We can talk about it when it gets closer, okay?

LIAM

Okay! I'll be helpful and good and I'll carry whatever you need me to carry.

MARGARET

Very good of you, dear.

(JACOB enters from the front door with a bucket of water.)

Go get ready for tonight. I picked out your clothes, they should be on your bed.

LIAM

(To JACOB) Have you seen the water, Uncle Jake? It's so nice!!

JACOB

(Also busy) It's very nice.

(He sets the bucket down near the table)

LIAM

Can I go next year Uncle Jake? Please I really wanna go!

JACOB

When it comes -

MARGARET

Liam! Go to your room and get dressed, I'm not telling you again.

LIAM

But I wanna go next -

MARGARET

Liam if I have to ask again you won't do anything next year.

LIAM

(On the verge of tears)

No! Please don't...I'll...I'll -

MARGARET

Just go to your room and everything will be okay.

(LIAM stands there for a moment, and realizes he should say nothing more and go to his room. He exits.)

JACOB

You didn't have to do that, Margaret.

MARGARET

What was I supposed to do? He wasn't listening to me.

JACOB

And he's going to have a fit in the church and the last thing -

MARGARET

He is not going to have a fit, Jacob. He will be fine.

JACOB

Maybe we should keep him in his room, tonight.

MARGARET

We are not locking him up like an animal, what makes you think he'll have a fit?

JACOB

He had one last time.

MARGARET

He'll behave, hun.

JACOB

There will be more people there tonight than last time, people are going see it and they'll talk about him being my brothers son -

MARGARET

Jacob, Liam will be fine, we will be fine.

(A moment)

JACOB

Okay. You're right. I'm sorry.

(They kiss)

MARGARET

You made sure to close the shop, right?

JACOB

Yes dear. I think there was mail before I got in, but I didn't check. I can -

MARGARET

I'll get it! I actually need you to check on Liam. Make sure he's wearing the right outfit.

JACOB

Sure.

(He walks towards where LIAM exited)

Liam! I'm coming in, make sure you're dressed.

(He exits, MARGARET watches him leave then exits through the front door. While she's gone we hear LIAM and JACOB speaking off stage.)

JACOB

(Offstage) Is that what Aunt Margaret said to wear?

LIAM

(Offstage) Yes Uncle Jake.

JACOB

(Offstage) And you're sure it's not the outfit that's laid nicely on your bed?

LIAM

(Offstage) I didn't see that there, Uncle Jake.

(MARGARET comes back inside)

JACOB

(Offstage) Well, put that one on and clean up your room a little before we leave, okay?

(JACOB enters.)

MARGARET

Did he -

JACOB

Nope.

(MARGARET laughs.)

The outfit he was wearing looked good at least but I don't think you'd be happy with it. Was there mail?

MARGARET

No, didn't see anything.

JACOB

Yeah, I thought it odd. I'm seeing things.

MARGARET

Hun, could you actually grab a bowl from the shop? It seems we're short on them for dinner.

JACOB

Oh, sure thing

(Jacob exits through the front door. While he does this, Margaret takes a letter out, rips it up walks and center down to the fire, bends over and throws the bits and pieces in. When it brightens, she pokes the fire a little and it glows brighter)

(JACOB walks into the shop, with the lights off. He goes over to the counter to grab a bowl from underneath when he finds the wooden horse LIAM

had made the other day on the counter. He picks it up and admires it. Then he hears the door begin to open. He stares at the entrance and puts the horse figure down as he ducks behind the counter. A figure opens the door and creeps in. As the figure walks over to the counter, JACOB sneaks behind the shelves to get to the lights. The figure picks up the horse figure and the lights turn on. JACOB is by the front with a hand gun. The figure curls up in front of the counter)

JACOB

Hands in the air, now!

(All of a sudden, we hear a soft cry. JACOB moves towards the figure and is shocked. He puts his gun down on the counter.)

Liam, what in the Lords name are you doing in here?

LIAM

I...I just...I -

JACOB

Do you realize what you're doing? I thought you were an intruder!

LIAM

I...I -

JACOB

I could have shot you! You could have injured yourself!

LIAM

B-But...I -

JACOB

Did you climb down your window again?

LIAM

No...I..I real -

JACOB

You're still wearing the outfit I told you not to wear, why didn't you just...

(He stops talking. LIAM is still crying. He walks over to LIAM who swings at JACOB but misses. JACOB takes a moment then moves closer.)

I'm not gonna hurt you. Just, explain yourself.

LIAM

I'm sorry Uncle Jake. I'm really sorry.

JACOB

Why did you sneak out your room?

LIAM

(Heavy Breathing) Be-before you came into the room to check on-on me. I-I heard you talking to Aunt Margaret...and...

(He doesn't finish and begins to let out tears)

(Pause)

JACOB

I didn't mean -

LIAM

And I wasn't gonna come down. But I remembered the horse I made, and I-I wanted to see it. But I didn't want to-to bother you and I knew the shop was closed. I thought I could just - just...

(LIAM cries harder)

I'm sorry I'm such a problem.

(JACOB thinks about what Liam has said, thinks about the whole year and the stress he has endured. He grabs LIAM and hugs him)

JACOB

You are not a problem, Liam. You never were. I regret saying and thinking those things. You are a gift from God. You have been such tremendous help this month, with the shop, with the church. Those crosses yesterday wouldn't have been as praised without you. I'm sorry for ever making you feel like you were anything but a blessing. I'm so proud of you.

(LIAM nods his head.)

LIAM

I-I Just wanted my horse Uncle Jake.

JACOB

I know you did. It's a lovely horse. *(Pause)* How about you make another one for me to sell?

LIAM

To sell?

JACOB

You like money?

LIAM

I can make money from my horsey?!

JACOB

Yes, of course. When you come home for good I'll help you make your horses. But I need to be with you when you make it, understand? You can't come into the shop without me anymore.

LIAM

Alright, Uncle Jake. I promise I'll be a good man.
(Jacob smiles)

JACOB

If your Aunt sees you walk into that front door, she'll flip. I'm not really in the mood for it tonight, so we need to get you back in the room. You swear you'll never climb out of your room again?

LIAM

Swear to God!

JACOB

Liam!

(LIAM jumps, he gets upset)

(Calm) Liam, don't swear to God. Swear to yourself. Okay?

LIAM

Ok...I swear to Liam.

(JACOB laughs)

JACOB

I'm gonna help you get into your window, but I'm only doing it this one time.

(JACOB grabs the horse and gives it to LIAM)

And don't tell your Aunt I'm doing this, okay? Between us.

LIAM

Between us!

JACOB

We'll take it slow so you don't hurt yourself.

(They leave the shop and the lights turn off.)

(BLACK OUT)

ACT [1]

SCENE [7]

(December)

(One half of the stage in the dark is the JUDICARS office. The other half is the house of the Woodsmiths, with no shop. The table has a small pitcher of water and the wooden horse LIAM crafted. MARGARET walking on with a bucket of water, she brings it to the table. After she drops it, she sighs.)

(JACOB enters through the front door. When he enters into the house, MARGARET looks at him. He looks tired)

MARGARET

How's it going out there, hun?

JACOB

A little tiring. And cold. Can't say it isn't nice to have another person with me.

MARGARET

Once Liam comes home it'll be a little easier.

(A beat. A dim light on the JUDICARS office, with the JUDICAR sitting down. A priest walks out and they speak. The priest, after finishing the conversation nods then leaves stage right. The light turns off)

JACOB

Is it weird for you not having him here as much?

MARGARET

Well, it is more peaceful, but weird, yes. I do miss him. I think the first month was fine, seeing him every weekend, but now its like he's living far away. Someone told me that was how higher education worked in the Old world, parents would send their children away months on end.

JACOB

Except we're sending our Nephew. (Pause) I can't believe it's been a whole year. One heck of a Christmas gift, huh?

MARGARET

I wonder what kind of gift we'll get his year.

JACOB

Maybe it's him telling us he wants to be a priest
(MARGARET Laughs slightly)
What? Do you think not?

MARGARET

He can barely speak to customers. I don't think he would be able to speak to pews of people

JACOB

Then a monk, one of the quiet ones! A scribe monk!

MARGARET

That sounds much more suitable.

(A long pause)

JACOB

Well, I should get back. Almost done.

MARGARET

I'll give you an hour before we go pick him up, okay?

JACOB

Sounds good.

(A priest comes up to the front door when JACOB runs into him.)

Oh, Father, Good morning.

(MARGARET hears, stops what she's doing and listens)

PRIEST

Good morning Mr. Woodsmith. Is your wife home?

(She walks over to the scene)

MARGARET

Yes, I'm here.

JACOB

Is everything alright, Father?

PRIEST

I have a message regarding your son.

MARGARET

We don't have a son.

JACOB

If you're referring to Liam, he's our nephew.

PRIEST

Oh, sorry, I have a message regarding your nephew.

(The lights black out, the JUDICARS office is lit up. The JUDICAR, wearing red robes, at desk, as a priest walks in.)

PRIEST

Your honor, he is safe in the cell.

JUDICAR

Thank you father. We'll give him dinner tomorrow but for now give him some water.

(The priest exits. JACOB rushes in, followed by a priest and MARGARET. JUDICAR jumps from surprise)

PRIEST

The Judicar is busy.

JACOB

(Frantic) Your honor, what is going on?

MARGARET

Jacob, relax, please.

JACOB

What is the meaning of this?

PRIEST

Sir please, if he needs you he will -

JUDICAR

It is all right, Father, Go.

(The priest leaves. JACOB is huffing out of breath.)

JACOB

What, happened your honor? What did he do?

(A pause, the JUDICAR gets up and walks to JACOB)

JUDICAR

I am sorry, Jacob, but he must face the consequences of his -

JACOB

What did he do?!

(another pause.)

JUDICAR

He was found in the church this mornin' with the holy eucharist in his hands and wine on his lips, passed out in one of the pews. He is charged for sacrilegious activity as well as breakin' and enterin'.

JACOB

What do you mean breaking and entering, what did he break into?

JUDICAR

There is a curfew for the children livin' in the church. All halls are monitored to make sure no one is runnin' about. One of our priest's believes he snuck out at night, broke into the front door -

MARGARET

But his room is on the second...floor...

(a pause.)

JACOB

There will be a trial, right?

JUDICAR

Yes, there will be a trial after Christmas, but there won't be need for one since -

JACOB

Since what?!

(A pause)

JUDICAR

He confessed to his crimes. The trial will determine his punishment.

JACOB

Your honor, this...this was a mistake, you know Liam well enough to...we can work with him, have him stay at the house, do you really think this is fair?

JUDICAR

Because he confessed, there may be an alternative path he can take.

MARGARET

Like what?

JUDICAR

Well, he can become a candidate for Good Friday.

JACOB

What?! For eating the eucharist and drinking wine?

JUDICAR

It's not just // eatin' the --

JACOB

He doesn't understand these things, // he just doesn't get it!

JUDICAR

Mr. Woodsmith, I understand, truly, but this is still a crime against the church // and God he... Jacob...Jacob.

JACOB

Crimes against the church?! He's just a boy! Did you even hear what I said he doesn't get it, you can't just do this to him!

JUDICAR

Mr. Woodsmith will you please!

(Silence)

Now I didn't want to say anythin' but there's more to it that I was meanin' to leave out. When I approached him about the situation, he striked me.

(A pause)

MARGARET

Striked you?

JUDICAR

Yes.

JACOB

He only does that when he feels harmed...I-I don't understand.

JUDICAR

I'm sorry. There's nothin' else we can do.

JACOB

Can't he come home till then?

JUDICAR

He must stay in the cells.

JACOB

Can we see him at least, your honor?

(A pause)

JUDICAR

Yes. Come with me.

(They exit. The Woodsmith house turns into the jail cells from Scene 2. Two cells appear on stage, one with LIAM, crying. The second cell with LEWIE, sleeping)

LIAM

Please! Please I'm-I'm so hungry! I...I need food! (Pause) Please! I'm hungry.

LEWIE

For the love of God feed this fucker so he shuts up!

(LIAM tries to cry silently. The JUDICAR enter with JACOB and MARGARET)

JACOB AND MARGARET

Liam!

(Liam looks)

LIAM

Uncle Jake! Aunt Margaret!

(They go towards the bar.)

I-i'm hungry, please I need food. I-I need to eat.

JUDICAR

(Yelling off stage) Someone give this poor boy food! Now! *(Exits)*

(JACOB and MARGARET at the cells, holding LIAM'S hand through the bars. Three council members walk out stage right in front of the Judicars office in the dark)

MARGARET

Liam I...do you know what you did?

LIAM

I- I was hungry, Aunt Margaret! I -

MARGARET

You could have waited until the morning Liam, what were you thinking?

LIAM

(Can't speak) I...I...I...

JACOB

We'll do our best to get you out of here, I'm sure the Council will understand.

(Light on COUNCIL MEMBER (ENSEMBLE MAN 1))

COUNCIL MEMBER

He is young, I do vouch for him. A creative young man who made a mistake.

(Light off)

LIAM

I-I didn't...I wasn't...

MARGARET

Just stay in there Sweetie, make sure you behave extra good, okay? They'll help you more if you behave.

(Light on COUNCIL WOMAN (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 1))

COUNCIL WOMAN

He is the son of that Maverick. Rumors have begun in Lake Jordan, saying he is working for his father. This kind of talk is not suitable for our Christian town.

(Light off)

LIAM

I...I'm suh...sorry. Please don't...don't...don't hate me.

MARGARET

No one hates you, Liam. I forgive you, the town will forgive you.

(Light on COUNCIL MEMBER 2 (ENSEMBLE MAN 2))

COUNCIL MEMBER 2

Justice needs to be served. Though I'm sure he's a bright young man, this sort of action cannot go unpunished. It is unchristian to do so.

JACOB

Before you know it, you'll be back home.

COUNCIL MEMBER 2
I think the only redemption could be seen through sacrifice.

COUNCIL WOMAN
Agreed.

COUNCIL MEMBER
I agree.

COUNCIL MEMBER 2
Above all, it is not up to us.

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS
It is up to God

(Black out)

ACT [1]

SCENE [8]

(Two cells, one with LIAM one with LEWIE. LIAM is crying. A priest comes down and brings food)

PRIEST
Alright alright, quit your whining.

(He hands LIAM the food then leaves. LIAM starts eating violently.)

LEWIE
If you eat like that you'll choke.

LIAM
I-I-I haven't eaten in so long.

LEWIE
Well you sure eat like it.

(It clicks to LEWIE)
When was the last time you ate anyways?

LIAM
Three days ago.

(A pause)

LEWIE
What's your name kid?

LIAM
(Breathes in)
My name is Liam. Liam Woodsmith.

LEWIE
I know you. You were in my class in the Academy last year, for a day.
Then you left.

LIAM
They kicked me out. I don't know why. But then the Judicar took me here
to learn and I started working with my Uncle when I was home.

LEWIE
Yeah, I know your Uncle. Why are you here again?

LIAM
I was...I was caught eating the bread they use in church and drinking the
wine, but I was just hungry! Honest! And I accidentally hit the Judicar.
(LEWIE laughs slightly.)
I didn't mean-mean to do it...if I knew -

LEWIE
I believe you. Don't worry.

(Silence)

LIAM
Are you my friend now?

LEWIE
Yeah, sure. We're friends.

LIAM
That's good. You're my first.

ACT [1]

SCENE [9]

(Good Friday)

(The dark envelops the room again, it lingers too long. A spot light in the middle of the stage, and the JUDICAR centers, black robes. His smile is warm)

JUDICAR

People of Lake Jordan, Good mornin' to y'all and may Jesus Christ save you

CROWD

Amen.

(In dim lighting on stage left, we see the same man from scene 5, drop off a letter into the Woodsmiths Mailbox. he then leaves)

JUDICAR

Good Friday falls upon us. A day we gather and we give to God so that our Lord can give to us. This year has been a blessing year. The love we gave our Lord exceeded expectations, but Lord our Father saw it coming. Our harvest hasn't seen a brighter day, our water's never been so pure. And there is not a sign for it to stop so soon. But I cannot help but...feel remorse over the lambs...

(A pause)

Our lambs this year are young, and it prompts us to wonder what they did to get here? What truly caused their crime? Did God, our Lord, leave their side? Let us not think of such questions, for they choose the light for themselves, they choose God, and choose to save this town and our people! This is a win for God! Can I get an amen?

CROWD:

Amen!

JUDICAR

So let us thrive from here on, our people sheen in God's Almighty's eyes, and our tradition grow with us. Upon this day, we have two lambs for the sacrifice. They have given their bodies to God and to our town. Both loved by Him, and to be cherished more in Kingdom Come.

(LEWIE and LIAM come out. Both are calm, almost looks sedated. LIAMS eyes are heavy. Two priests set them on the cross.)

(JUDICAR)

May God forgive the sins of man. Let peace rejoin throughout the land.
May God begin to forge this sin into harvest and pure water. In the name of the Father, the son, and the Holy ghost.

CROWD

Amen!

(The priests light the torch, and they burn on the cross. A hymn is played)

JUDICAR

Good Friday, Good Friday to y'all. May Jesus Christ cleanse you.

(BLACK OUT)

ACT [1]

SCENE [10]

(Two corner houses)

(Two men (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 1 and 2) enter from behind the houses and meet in the middle of the stage, surprised!)

MAN 1

Good Friday, Good Friday Mr. Kent!

MAN 2

Ah, Good Friday Good Friday Mr. Howl!

(They both walk to their respective houses, into the gate, and in unison pick up the paper and read it.)

MAN 1

Did you notice the crosses today, Mr. Kent?

MAN 2

Yes, there were two! How wonderful!

MAN 1

But there seemed to not be as much detail as last years.

MAN 2

I heard that Woodsmith was too depressed to put detail into this years crosses. After all, they were crucifying his son.

MAN 1

I heard it was his nephew.

MAN 2

In deed, Mr. Howl? On his side?

MAN 1

Indeed Mr. Kent

MAN 2

I heard it was in retaliation of the church!

MAN 1

Oh, don't believe everything you hear, Mr. Kent. He is a man of God. He walks the good path.

MAN 2

You are right, Mr. Howl, as always. It says in the paper that the Woodsmith boy confessed his crimes and accepted gracefully in the selection of the lamb.

MAN 1

Ah, bless God and his grace! He puts the impure on the pure path for sure, Mr. Kent!

MAN 2

In deed Mr. Howl. Well I should be on my way to the wife and kids. Good Friday Good Friday Mr. Howl.

MAN 1

Good Friday, Good Friday Mr. Kent.

(They both leave into the house.)

(BLACK OUT)

ACT [1]

SCENE [11]

(The Wordsmith residence. A table center.)

(When the lights go up, the room is empty. After a moment, JACOB and MARGARET enter the stage. There is nothing to say. Margaret sits at the table staring at the empty chair across from her. On the table, the little wooden horse stands centered looking out towards the door and a pitcher of water. JACOB walks center to the fire place. The embers glow on his face, he stares into it. Thoughts come and go into his head but none make it through his lips, except one)

JACOB

He was so quiet.

(MARGARET looks over)

Did you notice? He was... Well behaved.

(Silence.)

MARGARET

Yeah, he was. It was good that he was.

JACOB

Doesn't that...

(A beat)

I don't know. It didn't seem odd to you? Him being tied up, shirtless, in front of a crowd of people, yet so calm?

MARGARET

I think he knew, maybe, what was to happen.

JACOB

No, there's no way he could have understood what was going on.

MARGARET

He's not brain dead, Jacob, he's -

JACOB

I'm not saying that. I just know him well, and there -

MARGARET

(Offended) And so did I. What are you insisting -

JACOB

I'm not insisting anything, Margaret --

MARGARET

So how come I don't know him well like --

JACOB

(Annoyed) Jesus Christ Margaret I didn't mean it like that!

(Silence. JACOB has never said the Lords name in vain.)

I'm...I'm sorry, hun. I didn't mean to...I just...

(He breaks down. Margaret walks over to him, holding him.)

MARGARET

God will forgive it, hun. You're a good man. I know you didn't mean harm. You're just a little broken. We both are.

(JACOB cleans himself up and stands)

JACOB

I'm going outside. I need some air.

(He leaves towards the front door. MARGARET is still on the floor by the fire place. She too begins to cry. She looks into the fire with tears in her eyes. After a few moments, she stands up and walks by the table, picks up the horse and looks at it. JACOB enters back on stage with a letter in his hand. He is shocked at what he reads. MARGARET turns around and sees him reading a letter. She begins to tense)

JACOB

He's been contacting me.

MARGARET

(Trying to play it off) Wh-who is?

JACOB

My brother. He's been sending letters for a almost a year... do you think someone's...

(He looks at her and sees how tense she is. Then it connects)

Have you -

MARGARET

(Jumps) Have I what?!

(She realizes she freaked out and tries to remain calm but its too late.)

JACOB

You've been intercepting the letters.

MARGARET

Don't be ridiculous.

(She puts the horse back on the table)

JACOB

Margaret, I need you to be honest with me. Please.

(Does she tell him?)

MARGARET

I didn't need him interfering with this family anymore. He's caused enough stress, enough trouble, we're lucky we aren't associated with his crimes.

JACOB

I...I think he knows something. And it seems like he's still in town. For a reason

(Pause)

MARGARET

No. No way, you will not.

JACOB

I need to, there's...I just don't feel right.

MARGARET

You're going to risk our lives to find your skeptic-prodigal brother?

JACOB

Then don't go. I'll go alone.

MARGARET

I will not be dragged through the mud from your careless decisions.

JACOB

What's careless is the fact that something is obviously off and you don't see it! There is something going on, something my brother knew which drove him away from here.

MARGARET

But it didn't, right? He's still here.

(Silence.)

(MARGARET)

(Beat) I'm only looking out for you. You're all I have left. If anything were to happen to you because -

JACOB

I know. I...I get it. I'm sorry. I should get ready for the Council meeting.

(He exits. MARGARET watches him leave.

BLACK OUT)

ACT [1]

SCENE [12]

(A swing on stage. JACOB with letter in hand comes out and looks at it. He touches the swing gently as if it could crumble from his touch.)

JACOB

(Avoiding being too loud)

He-hello? Anyone here?

(Where JACOB entered, a man with a hood has followed him.)

MAN WITH HOOD

I knew you'd find the spot. "Meet me where we laughed and cried when we were young"

(JACOB turns around and he sees the man. He is a little startled and then he really looks at him. The man lets his hood down to reveal it's JOHN, Jacob's brother.)

JOHN

It's good to see you Jake.

(As he gets closer, JACOB turns furious and punches him in the face. JOHN is hurled back from the punch.)

JACOB

I thought you were dead, John. Two years I believed you were out there in the wastes, dead, crows pecking at your corpse. Two years of me trying to build back the image you collapsed. Two years of wondering why you would put your own brother and son in such a hell?

(JACOB is breathing heavy. JOHN has gotten up and doesn't retaliate.)

JOHN

Are you finished? Do you feel better now?

JACOB

No, I don't. I...I can't wrap my head around anything.

JOHN

I'll do what I can to explain.

JACOB

Explain fast, I can't be late for the council meeting.

JOHN

Has anyone followed you here?

JACOB

No, I was alone. I made sure no one saw me.

JOHN

Do you know what happened to the other letters?

JACOB

Margaret has been making sure I never got them -

JOHN
You're sure?

(pause)

JACOB
Yes. I'm positive.

JOHN
Alright. So now you believe me?

JACOB
I'm not believing anything until I get your side of the story. I'm here because...

(JACOB stops talking, he doesn't know if he should finish or reword his sentence)

There has been so much going on, I just need to figure it out.

JOHN
You're wondering why they killed Liam too, right? No, not killed. "Sacrificed him". It was murder, Jake. Pure murder.

JACOB
Can we start with why are you still in town?

(A beat)

JOHN
I was going to leave. I had no choice, they were going to turn me into one of their toys. I was going to die a man of God and that was the last thing I wanted. But leaving wouldn't do anything. I was just one person. All would be well if I left and died in the wastes. I was at the point of no return when I decided something needed to be done. Something needs to disrupt their system. Since then, I've

(JOHN)

gathered some other people who share my interest and we've been planning small attacks on the church.

JACOB
You started the resistance at the Academy. You did the -

JOHN
Yes, I sent the group to vandalize the church. Both times.

JACOB

You knew that young man, then? The one who was just crucified?

JOHN

Lewie, you mean. Yes. He was a good kid.

JACOB

You sent him to his death.

JOHN

He went on his own accord. But answer me this, what was it that he exactly did to be considered a lamb?

JACOB

He broke into the church and vandalized Gods home!

JOHN

What else did he do?

JACOB

Oh...well the paper said he stole -

JOHN

Yeah, the paper said that. He never stole the chalice. That wasn't his objective.

JACOB

That's...that's absurd are you saying the church is lying?

JOHN

Not just the church, but the Judicar. He's been the head of all this.

JACOB

And what makes you think that the Judicar would do this?

JOHN

Because graffiti isn't enough to kill someone Jake. But stealing a relic of the church, now that is the perfect crime.

JACOB

It doesn't make sense. Even if he didn't, he consented to the cross.

JOHN

Okay, then I'll give you another example. Why did he crucify Liam?

JACOB

I'm not talking about this. This is ridiculous, if I wanted more questions, I // would --

JOHN

Jake, please listen.

JACOB

No, Margaret was right, I shouldn't have come here.

JOHN

For the love of God please just listen.

JACOB

Why should I listen to you John?

JOHN

(Angry) Because you killed my son! I told you to keep him safe. I trusted you --

JACOB

Why did you leave him here then? You left him without explanation!

JOHN

I didn't want him to die you moron. He would have been eaten up by the waste, he wouldn't have survived. He was much safer in a home with people who would have cared for him, but clearly I was wrong.

(Pause)

Why did they crucify Liam?

JACOB

Because he broke into the church, drank the holy wine and ate the holy Eucharist.

JOHN

And why did he do all of that? What drove him to do it?

JACOB

How should I know? He said he was hungry...what are you trying to get at?

(A beat)

JOHN

Lewie broke into the church to be caught. He wanted to show us the motive behind these crucifixions.

JACOB

Motive?

JOHN

Like a crime.

(FLASH BACK: We see LEWIE behind the jail bars. A priest stands in front)

LEWIE

Hey, can I get some paper and a pencil? I'd like to write a letter to my Mama. She's all alone.

JOHN

Lewie also had a feeling something was up when he found out his brother was chosen as a lamb. He knew his brother wouldn't dare consent to being sacrificed.

PRIEST

You're not allowed to have contact with the outside world.

LEWIE

Listen, I just want her to know that I'm okay.

JOHN

I didn't want him to go, but he said it was for the best to find out what was really going on. He said if he were be locked up, he'd find a way to relay what he knows.

LEWIE

You can read it if you like, to check or whatever. You must have a Mom too, don't you?

(Silence)

PRIEST

Alright. Keep it short. I want the pencil back when you're done.

(Priest leaves. Lights on cell off)

JOHN

Once there was no one in the cells, I snuck into his and found a note hidden under some of the dirt. It included information about Liam.

(JOHN holds a letter in his hand)

JACOB

Wh-what does it say?

(JOHN gives JACOB the letter. He reads the letter)

JOHN

Look on the bottom where he mentions him.

JACOB

(He skims to the bottom, then...)

They starved him?

JOHN

That's what Lewie put together.

JACOB

And you really think they did that to him?

JOHN

It fits our theory on the motive.

JACOB

Well what is this motive then? The Judicar is crucifying people associated with the resistance?

JOHN

No. Because it's been going on years and years before the resistance was created. I'd say it started once the Judicar came into power. When I worked with him, I noticed something peculiar. It only connected when he sent me to investigate one of the criminals. I noticed he was very different from other people I've met, but he was familiar. The man had the same condition as Liam. By the end of the interrogation, I didn't find anything against him. A month goes by, he consented to the sacrifice and became a lamb. Not only that, but I saw Liam in there. It made me wonder if it were the crime which locked him up, or who he was?

JACOB

So you think it's the condition that put him in the picking.

JOHN

Yes, and no. It's not solely the condition. It's the fact that he is different from you, me, and most of the people Lake Jordan, and the Judicar is uncomfortable with that.

JACOB

So how are they consenting to the sacrifice? They have to sign a contract saying they agree to the crucifixion.

JOHN

That's what I don't know. What's weird is that Lewie stated in his letter he remembers being brought to the church for the ceremony, and then waking up in his cell. Everything in between was a blur, and now I want to find out what they're doing to get these people to sign. It's too dangerous for the resistance to get that close and personal to the church. I could really use your help since you work with the Judicar still, right?

JACOB

Yeah but I don't know what I could do.

JOHN

Try to find a way into the ceremony -

JACOB

I don't think it'll be that easy.

JOHN

Jacob you're a part of the Council, people in this town respect you and your word. If anyone can fight the Judicar it's you.

(Pause.)

JOHN

You have more power than you think.

JACOB

That was almost ruined because of you

JOHN

Will you forget about that for now please -

JACOB

No, John, I sadly cannot just forget, you completely and utterly fucked me over -

(Pauses.)

(JACOB)

Plus the Judicar and I haven't been speaking outside of Council meetings since Liam -

(Realizes how much time has really passed)

Oh, I have to go, I've been here too long.

JOHN

Alright. Go. I won't be in contact for a while, but expect it.

JACOB

Wait wait, when will that be? How will you contact -

JOHN

You will know. Be on your way.

(JACOB reluctantly leaves and exits. JOHN watches)

Oh Jacob, if you were to only open your eyes and see what's really going on, you could save so many lives. (BLACKOUT)

ACT [1]

SCENE [13]

(Council meeting. All council members are sitting in their original seats. JUDICAR is in white robes. COUNCIL MEMBER 2 (ENSEMBLE MAN 2) is standing up.)

COUNCIL MEMBER 2

The harvest last year was one of the most bountiful we've had in years, and the lake has been more purified than ever. I think we should find a way to celebrate the success of our Good Friday and cleansing day and celebrate the glory of God.

JUDICAR

Thank you Mr. Field, what a remarkable account. God Bless. Now before we finish this meeting I'd like to give a quick announcement. I will be takin' my leave for my mission a little earlier than usual. Durin' the second week of December I will be gone for a week to seek more people willin' to join our community and praise our Lord and Savior. That will fall around our December meetin'. One of the Priests will be appointed as a

(JUDICAR)

replacement for me and take lead on whatever is to be planned then. More details will be given when the time is closer. For now I just wanted to give you all the heads up. Thank you for joining our meeting today, in the name of the Father, the son, and the holy ghost.

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Amen.

JUDICAR

(Warmly) See y'all tomorrow at the cleanse.

(The council members get up and leave, as they get up, the JUDICAR stops JACOB)

Jacob, I'd like a word with you, if you don't mind.

JACOB

(Hesitant and scared) Of course.

(They wait for all the council members to leave.)

Is everything okay, your Honor?

JUDICAR

Everythin's fine. I'm gonna be honest with you, Jacob, I didn't think you'd show up tonight.

JACOB

I have a civic duty to come to these meetings, your Honor.

JUDICAR

Yes, of course. I also don't doubt you aren't taking this day so easy.

(silence)

JACOB

I'll also be honest, your honor. I was mad. Wrongly mad at you. But days and months passed and I've begun to accept it and I hope you can forgive me.

JUDICAR

That's what I admire about you, Jacob. You're honest, to your peers and community. I just want you to know that God has forgiven him. Your nephew has shown the highest service anyone could do for Jesus. He is on his way to the heavens as we speak, and the people of Lake Jordan will commemorate him when they drink the water and eat their food. He has

served the people and God. There's nothing I respect more than someone who does those two things.

JACOB

Yes, you're right. Thank you.

JUDICAR

I also forgive you, Jacob. If there's anythin' I could do, please don't hesitate to ask. I want to help you and Margaret as best as I can.

(JACOB realizes that this is the moment he could get to the ceremony. He doesn't know if he wants to do it.)

JACOB

Thank you your honor, I will let you know.

(The JUDICAR begins to leave, when)

Actually, there is one thing.

(JUDICAR stops in place and looks to JACOB)

I was wondering, would it be possible for me to come to the next ceremony of the lamb? I have been wanting to see the process for a long time. I know you have a limited audience usually but I'd like to see it once

JUDICAR

Oh, well the next ceremony is when I'll be on the mission and the audience is supposed to be random but...but yes, I will talk to the priests about it. We will see what we can do. Is that all you need?

JACOB

Yes, your Honor.

JUDICAR

Then I will speak to someone tomorrow about it. I will give you an answer as soon as I can.

JACOB

Thank you for very much, your honor! It means a lot.

JUDICAR

No problem, Jacob. I think it right for you to see what goes on during the ceremony. You are loyal to Jesus, you should witness this service. If that is all, I shall be running off now. Farewell Jacob. Good Friday Good Friday.

JACOB

Good Friday Good Friday to you too your Honor!

(BLACK OUT.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [14]

(December)

(The Woodsmith residence and shop.)

(JACOB enters the shop with a CUSTOMER
(ENSEMBLE WOMAN 2))

CUSTOMER

And even if you have a small table, I think that would be best.

JACOB

I'm currently working on a table not too small but not too big.

(mapping the table out through the desk)

So it wouldn't be taller than...over here, and wouldn't be wider than here.

(The customer is thinking)

JACOB

How about we talk further when it's more complete. Come by next week
and I'll have a mock-up and a price range.

CUSTOMER

Excellent. Thank you Councilman Woodsmith. Happy Holidays!

JACOB

Yeah you too Georgina.

(CUSTOMER leaves. JACOB goes to the counter
and cleans it off. MARGARET grabs her coat and
leaves the house)

(A priest walks into the shop.)

PRIEST

Good evening Mr. Woodsmith.

JACOB

Good evening father, what brings you to the shop?

PRIEST

A message from the Judicar. He's very busy getting ready for the mission and asked to personally send this message to all recipients.

(The PRIEST hands JACOB a letter. JACOB reads it.)

JACOB

A Christmas Auction benefit? (*Reads*) I see. Well that's very nice of him. I'll be sure to bring something. When is the Judicar leaving?

PRIEST

Tomorrow I think sometime before the ceremony, which I heard you will be attending as one of our audience members.

JACOB

Yes, I am intrigued to see what happens. I think it's important to understand the church much more than what I've already seen.

PRIEST

I see, Mr. Woodsmith, I agree that it's important for people to know the inner workings of Christ's teachings.

(A SHADY WOMAN (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 1) enters the shop and approaches JACOB)

SHADY WOMAN

Excuse me...

(Notices him speaking to a priest)

Oh, sorry, I don't want to intrude, I just had questions about your products.

PRIEST

Well Jacob, I'll be on my way then, you seem to be busy.

JACOB

Thank you for dropping by, Father. Tell his Honor that I'll be at the benefit. Happy Holidays.

PRIEST

As to you. (*To WOMAN*) Happy Holidays, m'am.

SHADY WOMAN

Happy Holidays, Father.

(THE PRIEST begins to leave)

Terribly sorry Councilman Woodsmith, didn't mean to intrude.

JACOB

No, don't apologize, it was just a quick chat. What was your question?

(The PRIEST LEAVES. The SHADY WOMAN turns around and watches him leave.)

SHADY WOMAN

Do you have bowls in stock?

JACOB

Any specific kind?

SHADY WOMAN

Nope. A bowl will do.

JACOB

Ah, then I'll surprise you.

(From behind the desk, JACOB gets a bowl)

JACOB

Alright, that'll be two.

(The SHADY WOMAN takes out two coins from his pocket and hands it to JACOB. He hands him the bowl)

SHADY WOMAN

Thank you for your service, Mr. Woodsmith.

(The SHADY WOMAN pulls out a letter and slides it to JACOB. JACOB looks at the letter and then the man.)

SHADY WOMAN

Happy Holidays.

(THE WOMAN exits. Jacob opens the letter. When he finishes reading it, he crumples it into his pocket. He exits the shop. From the house, JOHN walks into the house, followed by JACOB. He walks DS centered to the fireplace and throws the letter into it while tearing it. The fire glows on his face)

JACOB

I don't know how long my wife will be gone but --

JOHN

I won't take long. I want to briefly talk to you. I understand the ceremony is tomorrow.

JACOB

Yes and I will be attending.

JOHN

You will then! This is great news.

JACOB

John I'm not going to risk my relationship with the Judicar and the church for your agenda. You've been silent for months now --

JOHN

Do you expect me to always contact you? I was in hiding --

JACOB

It is an honor to be a guest of the ceremony and things finally seem to be looking around.

JOHN

Jesus Christ Jacob. I'm not asking you to interrogate the Judicar or priests. When you're watching the ceremony, keep an eye out. I will be around your shop when you get back, if you find absolutely nothing then forget everything, alright? That's all I ask.

(silence)

JACOB

Fine. When I get back tomorrow, I will tell you that you are out of your mind and there is nothing unusual with the process of the crucifixion.

JOHN

Then do so.

JACOB

And you will leave promptly and never return to my shop or my house again and if you try to terrorize my town...

(silence)

JOHN

Alright, Jacob. Turn me in then. If you find nothing then it's all for nothing anyway.

JACOB

Okay. Now leave before someone sees you.

(Another moment of silence JOHN leaves. JACOB goes to his desk and kneels before it.)

JACOB

Dear, God. I don't know what you're doing, what you're planning, but I just... I don't quite understand. It isn't my place to question you, but how can I not? You've risen me to high places I could never imagine but then you bring me to the low ones. Are these sacrifices? Do you sacrifice these things in my life that I've held dear to so that I could have better things? I was never one to question you, throughout my life I've said "there's a will up there." Was there a will for my brother to go astray? Was there a will for my nephew to die? Was there a will for him to die on the cross my own hands crafted? Is that some poetic justice I don't understand? I only ask, Lord, because I don't ask much. So if there's anything I've needed from you, now more than ever, it's an answer. I don't ask for much.

(JACOB signs the cross then exits. BLACKOUT.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [15]

(Outside the church. Jacob walks up to the two giant wooden doors, right when COUNCIL MEMBER 1 meets him)

COUNCIL MEMBER

Jacob! How wonderful to see you here!

JACOB

Joe, I'm happy to see a face I know. Do you think the Judicar will be there?

COUNCIL MEMBER

I think he's leaving soon anyways, maybe you can check to see if he is in his office.

JACOB

Right, will do. I'll see you in there!

COUNCIL MEMBER

As will I!

(Light goes off and the stage switches to the JUDICARS office. The book shelf has a book knocked off and a small door in where the book should be. JACOB walks into the office uncomfortably, the door has been left open.)

JACOB

Your Honor? Your door was open, I thought I'd walk in...

(No answer, He closes the door and walks in further. He looks around and doesn't see anyone but notices the book fell from the shelf, he looks closer and sees the small door. He is about to open the door and notices its locked. A priest walks to the door and notices it's closed. He wiggles the door and tries to unlock it, JACOB notices and hides behind the desk. The priest walks in and walks passed the desk. When he walks he eyes the desk, though he can't see JACOB he senses a presence. He is about to look at the desk when another priest walks in.)

PRIEST 2

Hello? Anyone in here?

PRIEST

Yes, father it's just me.

PRIEST 2

Oh good. I wanted to speak with you. Now just to be clear, be careful when applying the elixir. We have a special guest I'm not too keen on.

PRIEST

The carpenter?

PRIEST 2

Though the Judicar said we have nothing to worry about, I don't like it. He has bad blood. Is that clear?

PRIEST

Yes it is.

PRIEST 2

Alright. And you know which person you're --

PRIEST

It won't be hard to miss him. It's only three people in the ceremony. He'll stick out.

PRIEST 2

Right. Excellent.

(PRIEST 2 is about to leave.)

PRIEST

Father, did you close the Judicar's door?

PRIEST 2

No, why do you ask?

PRIEST

I left it open to grab the key to the elixir.

PRIEST 2

Well I'm sure one of the priests just closed it. You shouldn't just leave the door open.

PRIEST

Yeah, that makes sense.

PRIEST 2

Of course it does.

(The PRIEST leaves. The other PRIEST goes to the small door, opens it and grabs a vial. He locks the small door back and puts the fallen book where it used to be. He then leaves the study and locks it up. JACOB stands up, he is silent. He tries to rush out

the door. He unlocks the door to leave. As he closes the door back, the JUDICAR walks up behind him)

JUDICAR

Mr. Woodsmith?

(JACOB turns quickly)

JACOB

Your Honor!

JUDICAR

What are you doing?

JACOB

Oh I was actually looking for you! I wanted to thank you for the invitation, I haven't seen you in a while so I thought I'd be able to drop by before you left on your mission.

JUDICAR

Yes I'm actually leaving soon, I just had to grab few more things before I left.

JACOB

Well I'm glad I saw you. Thank you, once again your honor I am truly grateful to be here.

JUDICAR

I'm glad you're here. *(Pause)* You should go find your seat now, Mr. Woodsmith.

JACOB

Yes absolutely. Will do. Safe trip your honor, Happy Holidays.

(Lights out, a spot on JACOB. His face is tense, he looks empty, his mind going to various places. He walks around the stage when suddenly he is in his shop next to John)

JOHN

And they really said that.

JACOB

I couldn't believe it. You were right the whole time.

JOHN

An elixir?...What do you think they use it for?

JACOB

I...I don't know.

JOHN

Well, go on, what else?

JACOB

When they left...I went to the ceremony.

JOHN

Did you notice anything weird?

JACOB

Three criminals were on the floor, kneeling.

(On stage, three lambs on the floor on their knees.
We don't see their faces, two are white, one is
black)

JACOB

And a priest, the one who came into the room, was holding the wine
chalice.

(A PRIEST in front the lambs in a red tabard
holding the chalice to the sky)

PRIEST

Let the blood of Christ be present in these sinners, and let it cleanse their
souls so we may be cleansed for future days.

JACOB

The priest drank the wine, then gave it to each criminal.

(The priest does so, when he passes it to the black
man, he rings the inner part of the chalice with his
finger, lightly, and quick.)

JACOB

When they were finished, the priest held a scroll in his hand.

PRIEST

To those who wish to be at ease, to be let in heaven, to lift their sins, rise
and sign your name

JACOB

After he said that, one of the men stood up. The one who wasn't white.

(The black man stands and sluggishly walks over to the priest, signs his name and kneels in front of the PRIEST)

PRIEST

He has given his life for Christ and us all. Upon Good Friday, his body will be sacrificed, reflecting that which Jesus had once done before so that Lake Jordan be clean and profit.

(Lights on ceremony go out)

JACOB

He was the different one out of the two. Some how, they picked him. And still he stood up and signed his name.

JOHN

We need to find that elixir. It's possible they're drugging the lambs, maybe through the chalice?

JACOB

They didn't pour anything into it. It all looked...very normal.

JOHN

It's good enough for now. We have a lot of information to stop this and expose the church. If we had more evidence, it would prove useful. If there's anyway of sneaking into the church or...God I don't know.

(A moment, then JACOB realizes:)

JACOB

The Judicars Manor.

(The sound of drum lightly pounds off stage, it is slow)

JOHN

What about it?

JACOB

I'm...I'm going to his manor next week.

JOHN

What for?

JACOB

He's throwing a Christmas benefit...I think...

(The drum gets louder and faster.)

I think I can find something there.

JOHN

Jacob, that's very risky.

JACOB

There must be more evidence I could find.

(The drums grows louder, faster)

JOHN

We have enough for now, we must be smart about this.

JACOB

There is no better time, John! I'll go off into his manor and look! He must have stuff hidden in there. Maybe even notes or records of past crucifixions

(The drum grows louder and faster, into a vicious drumming)

JOHN

(Yelling over the drum) You'll get yourself killed if you're caught!

JACOB

(Jacob walks to stage Left)

It's a sacrifice I must make John! I have to!

(The drumming gets faster and louder and then stops abruptly, the lights black out, except one on JACOB)

ACT [1]

SCENE [16]

(Spot light on JACOB. Far Left. He looks out into the audience)

JACOB

Margaret, I'm really not that hungry.

(Spot light on MARGARET, far right. She looks out into the audience)

MARGARET

You must eat something dear.

JACOB

I'm sure there will be food there.

MARGARET

All right. If you say so.

(silence. JACOB looks tense)

What's wrong dear? Everything okay?

JACOB

Yes...everything is fine.

MARGARET

You look nervous. I'm positive you'll have a great -

JACOB

Can I ask you for something?

MARGARET

(Thrown off) Why, yes what is it?

JACOB

(Can't find words) Well...if...if for whatever reason...

MARGARET

What is it dear?

JACOB

(Pause) If I don't come back I need you to help me.

MARGARET

(Chuckles awkwardly) What do you mean?

JACOB

If you see me on the cross, tell the town I did not consent, you hear me?

MARGARET

Jacob what in the world are you talking about?

(silence)

JACOB

I don't know if I'll make it out of the benefit alive.

MARGARET

What do you plan on doing?

JACOB

Exposing the church and the Judicar for what they are.

MARGARET

Please, you sound like your brother!

JACOB

Margaret these sacrifices are fixed! They've been doing it for years and years. They need to be stopped.

MARGARET

Where's your proof, Jacob!? How will you stop them?

(A pause. JACOB takes the Wooden Horse out of his pocket and holds it)

JACOB

With you.

MARGARET

You're insane!

JACOB

Listen to me. I will never consent and agree to be crucified, alright? If you see me on that cross, tell the press, tell Lake Jordan what I just told you. I also wrote a letter -

MARGARET

Jacob! --

JACOB

This will be my proof.

MARGARET

Are you trying to get yourself locked up and crucified?

JACOB

No...No I would very much like to avoid it. But I have this chance to fix what was wrong -

MARGARET

Maybe you shouldn't go out tonight.

JACOB

Margaret they killed our nephew. Do you not see? Do you honestly think he would commit a crime against God?

MARGARET

Please stay home.

(silence)

JACOB

I should be on my way.

MARGARET

You're insane.

(Silence while looking into the audience. JACOB puts the horse back and leaves, spot life off. MARGARET leaves. BLACK OUT)

ACT [1]

SCENE [17]

(Two corner houses. Night time.)

(MAN 1 in ratted robes, taking out garbage, when suddenly from the other house, a MYSTERIOUS MAN (ENSEMBLE MAN 2) walks out, buttoning up his over coat and leaving through the gate. MAN 1 notices. After a few, MAN 2 steps out of his house, buttoning shirt.)

MAN 1

Mr. Kent, who was that fellow?

MAN 2

(Taken back by MAN 1 being there.)

Mr. Howl, why...who?

MAN 1

That man leaving your house, did you see him?

MAN 2

I...I'm not sure

MAN 1

Should I notify the authorities Mr. Kent? I don't like the smell of -

MAN 2

No! Do not, there is no need...I...

MAN 1

Mr. Kent, what is going on?

MAN 2

Nothing, Mr. Howl, absolutely nothing.

MAN 1

Mr. Kent, you can trust me you know. Did he hurt you? Is your wife okay?
Your children?

MAN 2

(Frightened) Yes, Mr. Howl, everything is fine...he...he was an affair. A
lo-lover of mine.

MAN 1

Lover? A...what?

MAN 2

Yes...a lover, Mr. Howl.

MAN 1

Where is your wife?

MAN 2

At bible studies, where she always is every Thursday night.

MAN 1

And your children?

MAN 2
With their mother.

MAN 1
Oh.

(Silence)

MAN 2
You won't tell a soul, Mr. Howl, right? If the church found out, if my wife
// were to --

MAN 1
I understand what would happen.

(Silence)

MAN 2
I'll tell him to stop coming, Mr. Howl. I'll tell him to never come back. I'll
reform myself, for God, for my family. I am...I am confused Mr. Howl.

MAN 1
As am I. As we all are...

MAN 2
So you understand?

MAN 1
I don't think there's a need to understand...

MAN 2
I get it, Mr. Howl...I get it. (*A pause*) There use to be a time where that
was okay, you know?

MAN 1
Was there?

MAN 2
I-I don't know. I heard there was. In the old world, they didn't care about
that kind of stuff.

MAN 1
This isn't the old world anymore, Mr. Kent.

MAN 2
Yes, how right you are.

(A pause)

(MAN 2)

Well, I should go to bed. Goodnight Mr. Howl.

MAN 1

Good night...Mr. Kent.

(MAN 2 leaves, MAN 1 stays a bit longer. He then leaves the garbage in front of his fence. EXIT.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [18]

(The JUDICARS manor. The main hall. A group of party goers, all men, stand in groups and speak, JACOB included, who is tense but not showing it. They all hold wine cups with water in them)

(The JUDICAR, wearing red robes, walks center and grabs everyones attention)

JUDICAR

My very honored guests tonight, thank you all for coming to my Christmas auction. Throughout the weeks I asked the people of Lake Jordan to donate special items they've either made or would like to be sold tonight. Some of you have also done the same. I have in my possession, a wonderfully crafted chair by Mr. Woodsmith, thank you Jacob.

(Claps from the people. JACOB bows slightly)

JUDICAR

All money will be funded to the church, the academy, as well as businesses like Mr. Woodsmith, to keep Lake Jordan a thriving town! But before we do that, let us eat, talk, and be merry. Christmas is only a few days away. I will let everyone know when we will begin, so until then, Merry Christmas!

CROWD

Merry Christmas!

(The JUDICAR walks over to another group. WAITRESS (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 2) in green dress and white apron walk across the floor with wooden platters of hors d'oeuvres and a pitcher of water. JACOB walks over to the JUDICARs group but is stopped by a PARTY GOER (ENSEMBLE MAN 1))

PARTY GOER

Jacob if I had known better, I'd say that chair you made was done by Jesus himself!

(They laugh)

Honestly, beautiful. You put so much lovely work into it.

JACOB

Why thank you. That means a lot.

(Party goer leaves. JACOB walks over to the JUDICAR who is speaking to PARTY GOER #2 (ENSEMBLE MAN 2))

PARTY GOER #2.

Then the man asks God, "Well, my wife and I have been fighting a lot. She gets really upset, and mad randomly. God I just want to understand my wife, if not her, Women in general" God thinks about this wish, and then with a booming voice asks, "So what color did you want that bridge?"

(group laughs, JUDICAR does too.)

JUDICAR

That one never gets old! You certainly are a joker!

(JUDICAR notices JACOB)

Ah Jacob, I wanted to speak to you for a moment.

JACOB

As did I, but you first your honor.

JUDICAR

Well I just wanted to say, thank you thank you thank you for your donation. The chair is your finest yet! I've already been hearing some guests talking about it.

JACOB

It's my pleasure your honor. If I can help the Church and the town with my craft then I'm a happy man!

JUDICAR

Excellent. Now what was it that you wanted?

JACOB

I was wondering if you could point me to the bathrooms!

JUDICAR

Oh yes! So by the stairs leading to the second floor, you'll see the bathroom.

JACOB

Perfect thank you your honor!

JUDICAR

Don't take too long! We'll be starting the auction soon!

JACOB

I'll do my best!

(The JUDICAR leaves. Blackout on stage except a spot on JACOB who is walking around.)

JACOB

I don't have long to be looking around upstairs, one of these rooms has to be his personal.

(JACOB enters a dark room with a blue light shining upon a wall. A WOMAN (ENSEMBLE WOMAN 1) in a green dress and white apron is tied to it. She is sleeping, JACOB approaches to investigate then the floor creaks. The WOMAN wakes up and sees him. She starts crying and screaming but not words, just noises. JACOB tries to hush her down)

JACOB

Wait, please don't cry. Who are you? What are you doing here?

(She cries still, mumbling pain)

JACOB

I want to help you, what do you need? Who did this to you?

(She begins to say things)

WOMAN

Papa...where's papa!

JACOB

Who's that? Where can I find him?

WOMAN

I...I want papa!!

JACOB

Please cooperate with me, I need your help.

VOICE

She won't be much help Jacob.

(JACOB turns around but its dark.)

JACOB

Who's there?!

(Lights turn on, the JUDICAR is behind JACOB, he is holding a wine chalice. the WOMAN is still yelling)

JUDICAR

Leave her be, Jacob. You can't help her.

(He walks over to the woman shushing her, the woman sees him and just cries softly. He pulls a small vile out of his hands, dabs his fingers in it, and rubs it on the edge of the wine chalice. He feeds the cup to the WOMAN who drinks. AFTER she drinks:)

JUDICAR

Hush now, relax, do not cry.

(JUDICAR BACKS UP)

Let's not act stupid Jacob. This was why you were in my office, weren't you?

JACOB

Who is she? What did you do?

JUDICAR

I calmed her down, with the same substance I used on your nephew, and Lewie, and other unwilling sacrifices. Is that what you wanted to hear?

JACOB

Why did you give it to her?

JUDICAR

Well, she was misbehaving, but all she wanted was me. You scared her.

JACOB

Wait, she's your --

JUDICAR

Yes. She is.

JACOB

You never told me you were married.

JUDICAR

I'm not. No one knows of her and her condition. I've hidden her here for years. Taking care of her in hiding. You know, Liam reminded me of her, when I first saw him.

JACOB

Why is she locked up? Have you locked her up for all these years?

JUDICAR

I lock her up when company is over. She gets sedated with the same elixir I give to the lambs. It soothes her, calms her down, and makes her obedient to my word, and it's a very safe liquid I promise you. But other than that she runs around the house freely when I'm not around. I do love my daughter, I'm no monster, Jacob, as you suspect me to be. I'm just a man who has been given punishment for sinful behavior. When news came to me about my daughters birth, about her mother dying, when it became clear she wasn't like the normal girls in Lake Jordan I questioned day and night why God did this to me? Was this punishment for pre marital copulating? But I know my God, Jacob, and I know he gave her a purpose in my life. To find you, of all people, discover what I've been hiding for 20 years, that is no coincidence.

JACOB

You're insane if you think this has something to do with God. That's not what God is or...does!

JUDICAR

Do you think I'm elated by it? Huh? Do you think seeing you here brings me joy? Honestly, I am heart broken. I took you as a friend. I invited you into my home and you invade my privacy. I trusted you, and you go and break that!

JACOB

You are drugging innocent people and murdering them! How can I trust you?!

JUDICAR

These people are FAR from innocent! They are abominations, living sin. We live in a world where resources are minuscule, and if we share them with people like my daughter, your nephew, we'd in turn give in to sin. You think I do these things to make myself happy but that's far from the truth, Jacob. I don't like it when I have to use the elixir, but I have to do it, otherwise we get no one to sacrifice themselves for God. We must survive this together, this is the only way. This town is full of sin, and people who are born of it. People like my daughter and your nephew don't understand like we do. People like Lewie Wrightman grow up with sin in their family, and the homosexuals break Gods law and the town law. I am doing you, and this town a favor! We would all be dead, run out of food to survive. Our crucifixions have been pleasing God!

JACOB

They deserve a chance! Liam was smart, and good. Lewie had so much to live for and -

JUDICAR

Jacob, there were many homosexuals who have been on the cross for their sin and you didn't bat an eye at that. Homosexuality has been a crime in this town for years. Are you advocating for them as well?

JACOB

Well, I guess if -

JUDICAR

All sin is judged the same. Laying with a man, being born with sin and raised in sin, there is no difference.

JACOB

Your view on God and Christianity is twisted! When did God advocate for violence like this!?

JUDICAR

Since sin was born from our very skin, Jacob. The mission of God, for years and years was to eradicate sin! In the old world, they dipped their babies heads in water to "wash away the sin", did you know that? That certainly went well for all of those people, right? That is why all those years ago this land was tormented, because they lost God.

JACOB

No your Honor, you lost God. Lake Jordan will not like this. We don't share your belief, when they find out, there will be riots.

JUDICAR

And who's going to tell them? You?

JACOB

I plan on it, yes. I'm not the only one who knows.

JUDICAR

Ah, of course. This is a fight your brother tried fighting years ago. Did he win? No. Yet he has apparently influenced you. I've gotten reports of him wandering the town. One of the lambs in the ceremony you saw last week was a member of the resistance that your brother has been leading. He ratted him out immediately to be spared. Well, he shall be. He has done a service to God.

JACOB

Alright, how do you plan on stopping me? It's just you and me here.

JUDICAR

I've got it figured out.

(JUDICAR pulls out a small hand gun)

JACOB

I see. Go ahead! Shoot me! Let it ring throughout the house! Let them all wander here and see me dead and what you did but no...you're smarter than that. You'll shoot yourself and blame me. Even if they take me away for your murder I have a back up that you'll never see coming. I'll live on, my word will live on and Lake Jordan will be saved from your heresy. So go ahead. You're cornered.

JUDICAR

Jacob, when my guests heard a loud scream I told them I'd be back soon enough. Well it's been too long, I must be on my way. And for the record, I am ashamed, Mr. Woodsmith, that I found you advancing and assaulting this poor woman. In front of my very eyes.

(He aims the gun at the WOMAN and fires. JACOB curls and realizes what happened, he looks behind him and sees the WOMAN dead. After a moment, the JUDICAR slides the gun near JACOB. The JUDICAR screams.)

JUDICAR

Someone! Please, help!

(The JUDICAR leaves. JACOB falls to his knees.
BLACK OUT.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [FINAL]

(Woodsmith house with no shop. On the table, the hand gun is laid down.
MARGARET has one bag. She has on a heavy coat as she looks at a letter in her hand. The letter of Jacob. She debates her motives, wondering what to do. She goes downstage center and rips the letter and throws it in the fire. She watches it burn as the fire glows on her face. A knock, three times, is heard from stage right.)

VOICE

Mrs. Woodsmith.

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)

Mrs. Woodsmith, we'd like to speak with you for a moment.

(Pause. MARGARET goes to the table, takes the gun, and hides it in her coat pocket. She goes to her bag then leaves to the second floor.)

(KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK)

VOICE

Mrs. Woodsmith?

(KNOCK KNOCK)

(The sun comes up, it is Good Friday)

(Two corner houses)

(Two men walk out on each side to the mail boxes to get the news. They spot each other, MAN 2 more cheerful than the other)

MAN 2

Ah, Mr. Howl! Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday!

MAN 1

(Cold) Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday to you too, Mr. Kent.

MAN 2

It has been a very long time since I've seen you around!

MAN 1

Yes. It certainly has.

MAN 2.

Beautiful weather, isn't it?

MAN 1

As beautiful as it will ever be.

(MAN 2 picks up paper)

MAN 2

I didn't see you at the Sacrifice this morning, Mr. Howl.

MAN 1

Yes, must have overslept.

(Silence)

MAN 2

Right. It was rather sad but at the end of the day a sin is a sin.

MAN 1

We are all sinners, Mr. Kent, but we do not have to die a sinner. We have our options to benefit our community and God himself.

MAN 2

Praise him, Mr. Howl!

MAN 1

Yes. Indeed.

MAN 2

Well, I have to prepare for the cleanse tomorrow. I will see you then, Mr. Howl!

MAN 1

Yes.

(Pause.)

MAN 2

Good Friday Good Friday Good Friday, Mr. Howl.

(Silence.)

MAN 2

Mr. Howl?

MAN 1

Huh? Oh...yes. Good Friday.

(MAN 2 exits suspiciously into the house. After a moment, a group of priests with weapons come in front of MAN 1's home. He points to MAN 2's home.)

(CURTAIN)