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**HARD TO BE WON: A THEATRICAL INTERPRETATION OF  
ELIZABETH KECKLY'S "BEHIND THE SCENES, OR THIRTY YEARS  
A SLAVE AND FOUR YEARS IN THE WHITE HOUSE"**

Selah DeGering

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Honors Thesis

HARD TO BE WON: A THEATRICAL INTERPRETATION OF ELIZABETH KECKLY'S  
"BEHIND THE SCENES, OR THIRTY YEARS A SLAVE AND FOUR YEARS IN THE  
WHITE HOUSE"

by  
Selah DeGering

Submitted to Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of graduation requirements  
for University Honors

Theatre and Media Arts Department  
Brigham Young University  
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Advisor: George Nelson

Honors Coordinator: Dean Duncan



## ABSTRACT

# HARD TO BE WON: A THEATRICAL INTERPRETATION OF ELIZABETH KECKLY'S "BEHIND THE SCENES, OR THIRTY YEARS A SLAVE AND FOUR YEARS IN THE WHITE HOUSE"

Selah DeGering

Theatre and Media Arts Department

Bachelor of Arts

Hard to Be Won is a musical adaptation of a memoir by Elizabeth Keckly, a black woman of considerable success who earned the confidence of Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Mary, in war-torn 1860s America. My adaptation of this story showcases a new perspective: that of Elizabeth herself. Despite her memoir narrating these events in her own voice, Elizabeth as an individual has been largely ignored or misrepresented in modern, idealistic, and racially ignorant retellings and criticism. Elizabeth as a token black person in the narrative of the Lincoln household cannot stand as representation of this woman's legacy when she was responsible for so much good. The founding of a relief association, schools, and her own work as a university professor in her later years deserve to shine as the successes they were. Alongside this, to avoid the deification of Elizabeth as a historical figure (as has happened with Abraham Lincoln), Hard to Be Won elaborates on her struggles, pain, and capacity for the love of others. Featuring music inspired by 60's jazz, traditional slave songs, and contemporary Gospel music, Hard to Be Won evokes movement and strikes the soul.

This manuscript is accompanied by a forward further discussing the purpose of the script and the research conducted to justify it as a valid interpretation of the source material.



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## I. Introduction

Plays are given their name by the “what if” component essential to their conception. Why do we play? To see what will happen. *Hard to Be Won* is a play heavily inspired by the characters and events that take place in Elizabeth Keckly’s Civil War-era memoir. In it, I discuss the relationship between Mary Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckly as seen in Elizabeth’s memoir, and what would happen if Abraham Lincoln, Mary’s husband and 16th president of the United States, dared fall in love with a black woman. The relationship between Mary and Elizabeth is widely discussed and agreed upon to be “remarkable” (Fleischner), however the perspective of the source material in historical context reads as simply a rich white woman heaping emotional labor upon a woman of color, an ex-slave who had been dealing with women like her for her entire life. Elizabeth Keckly lived in a world that was full of Mary’s. Erasure of the black woman’s perspective from media is a chronic problem; by giving Elizabeth power, even a sense of desirability, as opposed to Mary Lincoln, in this narrative, I restore to her the autonomy she deserves to have in recounts of her life.

## I. Refutation of Accepted Historical Analysis

In many of the representations of Elizabeth Keckly, she is heavily overshadowed by Mary Lincoln. Everything Elizabeth did in her whole life has been reduced to make room for her supposedly groundbreaking friendship with Mary, who is, according to the popular narrative, exempt from the biases and racism of the time. Indeed, Elizabeth was Mary’s dresser and modiste, and often a confidante to her private moods and fears. *Hard to Be Won* does not refute this. However, *Hard to Be Won* does argue against the notion that this relationship was equal or pleasant. Several times in the source material, Elizabeth comes to Mary’s beck and call even at a

disadvantage to herself. Mary's business "was a constant source of trouble to [her]" (Keckley, 145). This is often done in deep friendships, but what modern historians seem desperate to ignore is that when Elizabeth says no to Mary, Mary ignores her. There is little, if anything, Mary does to earn Elizabeth's trust; she does not care about Elizabeth's struggles or the efforts she goes to to fulfill Mary's wants. If Mary says jump, Elizabeth says how high, as it were. If Elizabeth says no, Mary sends four more telegrams demanding her compliance. In this, there is very little evidence of respect for Elizabeth as a person or her boundaries, and instead stands a complete disregard for her priorities or plans.

As romantic and lovely as it would be for Mary Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckly to be the best of friends without prejudice, due to the source material and other sources, I cannot reconcile. Elizabeth does not appear to have any confidante, at least none that she mentions by name. There are very few instances wherein Mary inquires about the goings on of her "best friend", but even then, "a greater number [of questions about Elizabeth's life were prompted] by curiosity; ... but [Elizabeth's] brief answers were not always accepted as the most satisfactory" (Keckley; 93, 100). Elizabeth describes no mutual confidence, likely due to Mary's fickle moods and seeming disregard for Elizabeth's personal life. While this is speculation so far, Mary's lack of sympathy for the black condition can be supported by Jennifer Fleischner's comprehensive history of these women, *Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Keckly*, which claims Mary "perferred the master to the weaker slave." Indeed the relationship between the two much closer resembled a child and "the always present Mammy Sally", though aspects of Elizabeth's personal character deviated from this role. (Fleischner, 53, 232).



What stood out to me most about Elizabeth's memoir was the fondness and softness with which she described Abraham Lincoln. While her tone throughout the novel is rigidly unattached most of the time, the moment Abraham Lincoln comes into view, it shifts dramatically into something personal and heartfelt. In discussing Mary, often directly afterward, Elizabeth seems to become bitter; after three paragraphs of describing Mr. Lincoln's fondness of pets and animals, and their sweet nature, she adds curtly, "Mrs. Lincoln was not fond of pets," elaborating that after her son's death, Mrs. Lincoln was fond of little and could not stand even the sight of flowers (Keckley, 80).

Like historians and America at large, I have no interest in tainting the memory of President Lincoln by implying he is a philanderer who carried on with the hired help. However, that is not to say that Elizabeth's fondness for the man "noble in all the noble attributes of God" could not have been shared. Describing her reaction to Abraham Lincoln's death, Elizabeth writes that "the blood had been frozen in [her] veins, and that [her] lungs must collapse for the want of air" (Keckley, 82). In the context that this woman has been beaten, raped, and lost a child to war, it is a hefty statement, and implies a deeper connection than simply employee and employer.

After the death of the Lincoln's prepubescent son, Elizabeth was present to wash and prepare the body for burial- not a dressmaking-related endeavor -and watched as Abraham wept over the child's corpse. She was there to comfort him in his grief while Mary was locked away in her room, inconsolable. She was invited on a trip to Richmond that, by all accounts, she had no real purpose in attending other than the Lincoln's wanted her alongside them. In this specific account, she elaborates on a time Abraham Lincoln stopped an entire procession to see a turtle,

and again when he stopped to talk to a black child on the road. She was touched by his attention to detail and appreciation for the world around him, which Mary had no affection for (Keckley).

The novelizations, play, movies, and books about these historical figures persistently ignore Elizabeth's perspective as a black woman, portraying her as equal and happy in her role as best friend to Mary. Elizabeth is more than the ex-slave, more than the "strong, independent black woman", and more than the "best friend"; Elizabeth Keckly was a person, who loved and lost. My play seeks to restore to Elizabeth the power and autonomy her narrative deserves as the main player in her own performance.

### III. Black Women in Media

The way black women are treated in media is a reflection of the public's perception of them, and in turn shapes that perception in a cycle of the snake eating its own tail. The caricatures of black women, "Mammy—the asexual, happy, obese, dark-black mother figure; Jezebel—the shameless, oversexual, schemer; and; Sapphire—the rude, loud, and overbearing emasculator" persist in modern media as a holdover from slavery (Balaji; Adams-Bass; Lemons, 102). Essentially, a black woman can only be one of these three things: a caregiver, a homewrecker, or a strong, independent black woman who don't need no man, as it were. Elizabeth Keckly falls into two of these categories depending on the context. On one hand, she took a caregiving role in the Lincoln home, loving children and serving as a confidant. On the other hand, she lived as a single woman despite her estranged husband and was a successful business owner with, at one time, twenty employees (Christensen, et. al., 449). At first glance, it may appear that *Hard to Be Won* is thrusting Elizabeth into the third role, the homewrecker. However, Mary and Abraham Lincoln's relationship was in shambles; Mary was possessive,

controlling, and abusive physically, verbally, and emotionally (Keckly, Fleischner). The place Elizabeth took most firmly in the Lincoln home was that of caregiver and friend. Her deeper feelings, for she was a person and had them, are rarely, if ever, discussed; *Hard to Be Won* gives a platform for the ideal of Elizabeth's heart to come through. She was a person who loved much, loved enough to serve others before herself even after half a lifetime of doing so involuntarily. The "what if" of this play is not only what if Abraham Lincoln fell in love with a black woman, but what if Elizabeth fell in love and had it reciprocated? What would a loving relationship look like for her?

Though Elizabeth describes her pain in her book to varying degrees, she is not recognized as a person who suffered. The stereotype of black people's inability to feel pain, physically or emotionally, persists even into modern medicine. Research conducted in 2016 shows a proportion of Americans without medical training believe that "the black body is stronger and that the white body is weaker" (Hoffman, Kelly, et al). Black women as "not feeling subjects" in media excused society's poor treatment of them; the white woman's social role as the domestic guardian "excluded black women; slavery and labor spoiled notions of virtue, home, and privacy for women of African descent" (Cobb, 28-29). Exploring Elizabeth's pain about the loss of her son, her rape, her estranged husband, and the death of Abraham Lincoln acknowledges that pain was had. She experienced it, she described it herself in her memoir, and according to modern and classic media, it does not appear society is aware.

Elizabeth's exclusion from the Lincoln narrative is no less than intentional. Robert Lincoln, son of Mary and Abraham, tried to erase her from his family's history, and was, to a point, successful (Christensen, et. al., 449; Fleischner, 318). By 1935, just shy of thirty years

after Elizabeth's death, historians debated whether she even existed. By the 1960s, her remains had been taken and buried in an unmarked grave, as her slave ancestors, while her original resting place was paved over (Fleischner, 319, 324-325). Today, while her existence has been recognized, if you search Elizabeth Keckly in a web browser, an overwhelming majority of results claim her as a confidante to Mary Lincoln and nothing more, relevant only for who she served rather than how she served. Even this small note of acknowledgment is an example of "participating politely but not taking over ... and veering away from contentious topics" (Joseph, 195).

Elizabeth and Mary being best friends untouched by racial bias is as radical a theory as Elizabeth and Abraham having an emotional affair. The latter, however, is a more powerful perspective on history. Interracial relationships between white men and black women are taboo at best and forbidden at worst; studies show that "white-Black interracial couples are viewed more negatively than other racial combinations" , and that these respective groups, out of all others, have "the strongest taboos against interracial marriage." (Childs, 544; Rockquemore and Brunnsma, xiii; Qian, 33).

#### IV. Methodology

##### a. Style

Plays allow us, the audience, to enter the world of the characters and see them as tangible people with actual consequence in their own right. Just as well, they allow us to put ourselves in the shoes of those whom the story represents so that we may better understand their perspective. Given that my main objective is to showcase Elizabeth's personhood and view, a play is the most effective way to accomplish this goal.

If a play lets us into the world of the characters, a musical lets us into the mind. Elizabeth Keckly was a woman of few words outspoken, often to the point and in the background. A musical format allows us to see, hear, and feel the impressions of her soul as events play out before our eyes.

b. Perspective

It occurred to me to write this from many different perspectives. I entertained the idea of telling Elizabeth's story from the perspective of one of her students or apprentices. An apprentice would know her well, love her dearly, and respect her- all things I wanted the audience to leave a performance with. However, an apprentice's perspective would be removed from Elizabeth's personal experience. They would only know what Elizabeth allowed them to know, and to a point, this still came through. We see Elizabeth's life as she tells it, biases and all. However, an apprentice as a narrator was ultimately cut because as a character, the narrator would have little to offer the script as a whole and would only serve as a plot device to deliver information. If I wrote them to be more than a plot device, their own perspective would color the plot, and while it may be interesting, I did not want to deviate from what I felt was an honest interpretation.

I also considered writing from the perspective of Robert Lincoln, the Lincoln's eldest son. His viewpoint would be purely antagonistic, which would serve as a way to make the audience draw their own conclusions about what they saw. However, Robert would be abhorred at the idea of Elizabeth and his father having any degree of friendship, much less an emotional affair. Robert was so outraged and embarrassed at Elizabeth's book that he hunted down and destroyed as many copies as possible. He was so successful in his endeavor to wipe Elizabeth from the record that, as aforementioned, historians questioned whether or not she even existed

(Fleischner, 318, 324-325). These historians were proven wrong by people still living that had known her, but the point stands: Robert would not have delivered on the story I wanted to tell. That, and giving a racist white man voice and control over Elizabeth's narrative was the last thing I wanted to do.

Having Elizabeth tell her own story was the only way to do this properly. Doing so allowed me to use direct and paraphrased quotes from the book, enabling a richer and more true to the source end product.

### c. Inclusions vs. Exclusions

The most important part of writing an adaptation is knowing what to include and what to cut. I had to go through the primary source record and rigorously organize what of the anecdotes to include, which to expel, and which to combine or retell in a new context. Elizabeth describes many scenes in her book where she outlines dialogue and reactions- very helpful in a theater-style adaptation -however, more frequently, she offers one-off statements that generalize a person's behavior. For example, "[Mary Lincoln] was shrewd and far-seeing, and had no patience with the frank, confiding nature of the President" (Keckley, 43). I had to take all of those one-off statements and turn them into fleshed-out characters, or create characters, such as James, Rose, and Anne, who fulfilled roles that were mentioned but rarely explicitly laid out.

The scenes Elizabeth specifically noted I took special care to draw quotations from, and made an effort to replicate the behavior shown in the book throughout the play, even in fabricated interactions. For example, Abraham Lincoln is shown teasing his wife, dramatically reciting poetry, and making passive jokes (Keckley). This version of the character seen in Elizabeth's memoir is very different from the morose, brooding Abraham often described in texts

such as Bartelt, Donald, and Fleischner. Elizabeth's Abraham is instead charming and, while occasionally melancholy, is only in poor humor when actively distressed. He may think a lot and be the sort to look out windows and ponder, but he avoids stewing in sadness. This perspective on the character allowed me to build him into a more rounded persona with depth, where all versions of the man could be seen in elements of personality.

The brief overview of the slave years in the play is due to Elizabeth's own brevity on the matter. She describes her time in the White House as the golden years of her life, and in an effort to respect that, I cut most of her time as a slave. In addition to that, grotesque, live performances of beating and rapes, while relevant and worthy of discussion, would take away from the intention of the story. While such scenes would display Elizabeth's pain, the public is well aware that slavery was bad. This story is not about slavery; it is about a woman falling in love, and losing that love. So rarely do we see such stories from the perspective of a black woman.

James Keckly is very briefly mentioned in Elizabeth's account of her life. She mentions that he pursued her for a number of years but she rejected him. She mentions their marriage, separation, and finally his death many years later, for which she shed no tears. For the purposes of this play, I had to invent James as a person who could have tricked Elizabeth into marrying him, someone who could charm her while simultaneously gaining information he could use to manipulate her. The result is the version of James we see in the play: suave, observant, and well-spoken.

George, Elizabeth's son, is also mentioned very briefly in the source material. She notes his birth, which she dreaded, and his death, which she mourned. Further research found that George was "almost white" in looks, even to the degree that he made it into the Union army as a

white soldier. To solidify this integration into white society, he took his biological father's last name, Kirkland (Fleischner, 222). I briefly speculate on what Elizabeth's feelings on this matter may have been, because she, like her mother, was a child of rape by a white man. Unlike George, she took and kept her mother's last name until she was married, and did not claim her biological father's name even as a widow. In fact, she kept her paternal parentage a secret until she died (Fleischner, 29, 88). This decision on George's part reads to me as a profound disrespect. Given that Elizabeth did not want a child in this way, and that George looked very different from her, I imagine this relationship as strained and complicated. George also spent eight years with James as his step-father, from whom he may have picked up poor behavior and treatment of his mother (Fleischner, 142).

In the Cast of Characters, it is noted that Willie, the Lincoln's son, is to be played by the same actor that portrays George as a child. This is in part to keep the cast small, but also to inform the audience that caring for Willie would have called Elizabeth back to her own son. Willie's death is an opportunity for her to grieve her George, and the death of a once positive relationship. It also serves as a direct comparison between the children, drawing out their similarities for the characters and the audience.

In the case of the other Lincoln sons, they are not present in the script. Child actors are hard to work with, and while Tad or Robert's inclusion may be interesting, they make the cast more complicated than it already is. Also, child actors are difficult to find and work with due to child labor laws; too many children would make the show difficult to perform and would blacklist it as too unplayable for many theaters. Just as well, the other two Lincoln sons had little to do with the heart relationship of the play, Abraham and Elizabeth. Elizabeth cared for them,



watched them grow, and loved them. She admired that Abraham loved them, and that was a point of attraction for her (Keckley). However, a mess of entrances and exits by children would distract the audience from the main conflict and interest, which is the romance.

The discrepancy between the Keckly and Keckley spelling of Elizabeth's last name is due to this: Elizabeth spelled her last name "Keckly" in her own hand, while the book publisher spelled it "Keckley". To take after Fleischner, I prefer to use Elizabeth's spelling of her name when referring to her person.

#### d. Composing

Choosing a composer was a simpler matter than one might anticipate. Amy Loertscher and I have had a years-long close friendship and music-writing history; she was the first person I thought of to endeavor on this project. She also studied music in university, and was willing to seek out mentorships on the style of music specific to *Hard to Be Won*.

#### e. Musicality/Lyrics

As far as music goes, I wrote all of the lyrics and many of the melodies. A lot of thought went into the structure of these lyrics; I made an effort to give the songs varying tempos, time signatures, and verbal punctuation. Giving each of the characters a "voice" was also key to a successful play. While all of the characters need to have distinct language and dialogue tics, they also needed to have a specific sound in music. Mary, for example, is very refined and aggressive. All of her melodies are clean, specific, and have polished beginnings and endings that can be seen best in *At Least I'm Me*. Meanwhile, Abraham has a very slow, calm sound in all of the songs he's included in. The contrast between Mary and Abraham, the greatest musical contrast in the show, can be seen best in *The War Room* (Appendices). *The War Room* is also a great

example of a song that supplements dialogue in a scene. Where *Nightmare* is conveying thoughts and feelings unspoken to inform the audience, *The War Room* uses music to fill in for the audience that these characters are having a fight. What the fight is about is of little importance, hence why we have a song and not a scene. Fights between Mary and Abraham are so often and so varied that any given fight is irrelevant; the audience needs to know that the two fight passionately, and that Abraham is frequently away, *The War Room* fulfills both purposes, succinctly feeding the audience information about respective character while simultaneously moving along the plot. (Over the course of editing, *The War Room* was cut from the script. However, I include it in the Appendices as an example of this principle)

Because this play covers the span of many years, music is used to segue between events. The song serves as a sort of elevator music- when it starts, we, the audience, are in one time, and when it ends, we are in a new one. *Dancing* is a perfect example of this. Over the span of this number, James and Elizabeth court, are married, and their relationship falls apart when James is revealed to be dastardly.

A series of reprises are used to recall memories for the audience and the characters at the same time, intrinsically tying moments together. *Free Blacks of St. Louis* is played in some variation three separate times, pulling attention to Elizabeth's roots and the source of her freedom. St. Louis in the world of the play, in many ways, is a symbol of freedom for Elizabeth. There, she saw people like her thriving and living their own lives, something she has only had limited opportunity to do even after ending her time as a slave. *The Fall of St. Louis* is a symbolic death of Elizabeth's hope for the future, foreshadowing Abraham's death soon after.

In terms of musical style, the musical's composer, Amy Loertscher, has described it as "big band swing," with a full brass section (trumpet, trombone, saxophone, and french horn), and a rhythm section (drums, guitar, bass, piano), in addition to a string section that represents Abraham and Mary's sophisticated, classical world, apart from the rowdy, 60's jazz-inspired world of Elizabeth and St. Louis. The moment of Gospel music in *The Freedmen* calls specifically to slave song tradition, rhythmic and a capella., shared amongst slaves of hard labor. Elizabeth was not one of these slaves, and may not have necessarily known or sung many of these songs. Slave songs are a huge part of this time and culture, however, and needed to be represented..

f. Visualization

When writing a play or musical, one must be able to picture potential staging or choreography. While the playwright will likely never direct the script themselves in a production, having a script that is easy to be performed allows directors more flexibility in their portrayals. I personally spent much time picturing aesthetics and staging to help set the mood for various scenes in my mind. Doing so helped me write the story in the world I had imagined, and write music in that world alongside dance and timing that had to be reflected in the score. While I did not write the score personally, I did record my melodies and timing and send them to my composer for consideration. Much of this work was preserved in the score, as Amy and I worked very closely.

g. Expert Insight

I first contacted Jennifer Fleischner, recognized expert on Elizabeth Keckly and her relationship to the Lincoln family, on April 9, 2021. After a few questions, she advised me to

read her book and collect my thoughts before further discussion of my thesis. I conducted a forty-five minute interview with her a year later on March 21, 2022 while in the polishing stage of my playwriting. By this time, my views and opinions were fully developed and we could hold a more engaging, informed conversation for the record. Dr. Fleischner noted to me specifically that this interview was to be used for no other purpose than citation for my thesis, and was to be printed in no other place nor context. The full transcript found in the Appendices is only edited so far as amending mistakes made by the Zoom transcription software. I have included relevant moments from the interview below, regarding Elizabeth's relationship with Mary and Abraham respectively:

00:00:23.100 --> 00:00:31.200

Selah DeGering:        Okay, so my first question is: what is remarkable about the relationship between Elizabeth Keckly and Mary Lincoln?

00:00:52.950 → 00:05:57.690

Jennifer Fleischner:    I would say that um. It's. It's remarkable, to the extent that it was noticed, it was observed, you know Keckly was a known figure at the time, noticed in the White House. After, people understood their closeness, you know, that they. They had. I don't know how they understood the closeness exactly, but carefully. It was, you know, the language of the time, put it in the way you would imagine Keckly's loyalty to Mary Lincoln. You know, helpfulness, loyalty, it wasn't- wasn't- it's not that they were seen as equals within the relationship itself, you see.

...

I think that suggests that kind of freedom, a sense of herself in a

relationship with this woman that transcends- clearly transcends being, you know, a hired dressmaker. [unintelligible]

You know, women and their dressmakers, women in their, you know, hair salons even today, I suppose, you know, you have this- you talk, you know, there's a kind of- can be a gossip, it can be a relationship, I think this did go past it- go beyond it.

And so, and again, you see, in Mary's letters, certainly the word friendship come up.

There's not. Keckly doesn't use it in her book, she wouldn't use it in her book is my guess, but. There aren't letters. We don't see letters currently that are, you know, I haven't seen any, you know, which that's- but, you know, she- Even early on, you know, when she was in slavery, there's the one letter you can read to the, you know, one of the women who was her half sister and not- she had never been. You know, in the position of a mistress and wasn't Fanny but this letter to Fanny speaks Keckly's sense of herself as equal, you know, even though not, of course, right, but her-the way she writes, The self possession, the [unintelligible] gossip frankly.

It comes from herself is the thing.

So maybe in the end that stands out.

00:33:36.930 --> 00:33:56.430

Selah DeGering: What is your opinion, if any, on the relationship or potential relationship of, like, which any, like, any kind: friendship, a confidant, a person that works in your house, um, between Elizabeth and Abraham Lincoln?

00:34:01.230 --> 00:34:07.740

Jennifer Fleischner: Well, I don't read that, I don't see what you're talking about seeing her but, um, but that's okay.

00:34:09.720 --> 00:34:10.830

Selah DeGering: I didn't expect you to.

...

00:34:24.210 --> 00:35:52.500

Jennifer Fleischner: I think that. One of the things she- she talks about a lot is Mary Lincoln's, like, out of control. This and particularly around the mourning, around that scene, and I think in that stoicism that she learned to prosper, probably the self to survival. Part of her identity is something that, I think, and I think also she might have seemed mean, I think that her connection such as is to Lincoln had to do with it kind of respect and, and. And he was a depressive guy, he was depressed, you know. That kind of connection in terms of mourning and doing in a different way and. And so. I think, maybe some of it had to do with that and some of it, maybe had to do with

they're both in the position of having to deal with Mary, actually.

00:35:53.040 --> 00:35:53.250

Selah DeGering:     Yep.

00:35:54.360 --> 00:38:23.610

Jennifer Fleischner:   And so I see that. I see also, Lincoln is pretty accessible. And so that scene, they're looking at a window there you know with the goats and all that comment about not you know, Mary doesn't like goats is a comment, I think, partly to establish the what she shares, you know sort of a real connection, where she actually shares with Lincoln or identifies. And Lincoln, you know, when he writes about slavery before he's President and he talks about he talks about is the system of Labor. And you know as race, you know, he was racist, he had this idea blacks and whites can't live together, it all sorts of things you know, I didn't- in the Douglass-Lincoln debates. You know, he doesn't offend race and so when he talks about slavery, it is a system of Labor where you don't get the fruits of your Labor and that's the injustice of it like that's profoundly the injustice, and I think his understanding of work and Labor would have been something correctly understood. She talks about that explicitly, you know, being worth her salt. She's very bright, all of that, about Labor and we're not getting paid for it and not getting paid for it.

So I find I, my impression, like, if I were going to- So, no, but also, you know, Lincoln lived in a man's world, so he's- he's not going to have a

close friendship with her. And I mean the White House was a man's world, I mean, that was part of Mary's problem with it too. But. So I think that, to the extent that there's a connection, it's around work, it's around ways of mourning and. And also an alliance to, you know, around managing Mary, frankly.

In my discussion with Fleischner, I found that many of her views of the source material were relatable at best, and confusing at worst. In those included above, despite her opposing standpoint on my interpretation of Abraham and Elizabeth's potential relationship, I found it interesting that the very points she outlined as being the basis for their business relationship I also used as basis for their romantic one. This exchange goes to show the dichotomy with which those interpreting historical records can come to conclusions so different. Despite her professional opinion, I maintain my ground that the nature of their relationship is ambiguous and up to interpretation.



## Hard To Be Won

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A new musical  
Book and lyrics by Selah DeGering  
Score by Amy Loertscher

Contact:  
Selah DeGering  
748 Wymount Terrace  
Provo, UT 84604  
(801) 462-1814  
[selahdegering@gmail.com](mailto:selahdegering@gmail.com)

Hard To Be Won  
Book and Lyrics by Selah DeGering  
Score by Amy Loertscher  
Copyright © 2021  
A new musical  
8 women, 7 men, 1 boy

### Cast of Characters

Elizabeth Keckly	A mixed race woman.
George	10. A white boy with curly hair. Double cast with Willie.
Older George	16. A white boy with curly hair.
Abraham Lincoln	A middle-aged white man.
Mary Lincoln	A middle-aged white woman.
Willie Lincoln	10. Abraham and Mary Lincoln's son. Double cast with George.
Anne	A young Irish maid.
White Ensemble	3 women, 3 men. Caucasian. Used to play bit parts. (Bookeep Master Garland, Mistress Garland)
Black Ensemble	3 women, 3 men. African-American. Used to play bit parts. (James, St. Louis residents, Freedmen)

Note:

This is a race-heavy play that explicitly discusses racial issues. A visual nod to this would be an **all-black cast**, highlighting the absurdity of elevating people above one another over arbitrary difference.

This is, of course, a suggestion over a mandate.

In front of a bookshop on a busy street in Washington D.C., 1868. The window advertises in big letters, “LINCOLN WHITE HOUSE TELL-ALL! BEHIND THE SCENES BY ELIZABETH KECKLEY”, behind which is a large display of books. Passersby look at the sky and wince as it begins to rain. Many cover their heads with newspapers or pull out umbrellas.

ELIZABETH

I just can't believe it.

A disgruntled WHITE MAN struggling to open his umbrella stops.

WHITE MAN

Do yourself a favor and spare the read.

ELIZABETH

Excuse me?

The man opens the bookshop door. ELIZABETH sees he has a book.

ELIZABETH

What are you doing with that?

WHITE MAN

Better return it than give it to you.

ELIZABETH

You didn't like it?

WHITE MAN

Why do you care?

ELIZABETH

I wrote it.

WHITE MAN

My review.

He throws the book at ELIZABETH's feet and spits  
on it before he exits. Thunder and lightning.  
Pouring rain. ELIZABETH picks up the book. Enter  
BOOKKEEP, from the door of the shop. He takes  
down the signs. The book display is empty.

ELIZABETH

What are you doing?

BOOKEEP

Publisher's pulled it.

ELIZABETH

What? Why? No, stop-

Enter WHITE WOMAN. BLACK WOMAN,  
BLACK MAN, and WHITE MAN are pedestrians  
on the street.

BOOKEEP

I'm sorry, Mrs. Keckly. It's over.

A vicious crack of thunder. BOOKEEP exits into  
the shop, shutting the door in ELIZABETH's face.  
*Because of You*

ALL

FREEDOM  
HARD TO BE WON  
HARD TO BE WON

WHITE WOMAN

You're Mrs. Keckly? Elizabeth Keckly?

ELIZABETH

Yes?

WHITE WOMAN

BECAUSE OF YOU  
MY SERVANTS WILL SAY  
AND THINK WHATEVER THEY LIKE

BLACK WOMAN

BECAUSE OF YOU  
MY FAMILY WAS FED  
YOU SAVED OUR LIVES

BLACK MAN

BECAUSE OF YOU  
I HAD A ROOF OVER MY HEAD

WHITE MAN

BECAUSE OF YOU  
THE LAST OF GOOD TIMES ARE DEAD

ALL

BECAUSE OF YOU...  
BECAUSE OF YOU...  
FREEDOM  
HARD TO BE WON  
HARD TO BE WON...

BLACK MAN and BLACK WOMAN exit.

ELIZABETH

ALL I DID WAS TELL MY STORY  
WASN'T THE FIRST, NOR THE LAST  
ALL I DID WAS TELL MY STORY  
THE BLOOD AND TEARS OF MY PAST  
ALL I DID WAS TELL MY STORY  
HAVE I NOT THAT RIGHT?  
I'M A FREE WOMAN NOW  
I'M A FREE WOMAN NOW  
HAVE I NOT THAT RIGHT?

WHITE ENSEMBLE

BECAUSE OF YOU  
(BECAUSE OF YOU)

THE GOOD TIMES ARE DEAD  
BECAUSE OF YOU  
(BECAUSE OF YOU)  
WE ALL LIVE IN DREAD  
BECAUSE OF YOU  
BECAUSE OF YOU

As *Because of You* crescendos, the ensemble points accusatory fingers at ELIZABETH. The music cuts out with a school bell tolling. All the ensemble members sit and raise their hands in the same moment. ELIZABETH is a teacher, a professor at the UNIVERSITY OF OHIO. She sighs in exasperation.

ELIZABETH

Y'all got me rambling again. Congratulations, school is out.

Elizabeth erases the book display sign leaving only her name; the display is now revealed to be a chalkboard. ELIZABETH writes "DRESSMAKING 101" on the board, and erases "ELIZABETH." In its place, she writes "PROFESSOR."

ELIZABETH

Doesn't that look good? Professor. Prafessuh Keckly. What my daddy wouldn't have done to have a title like that in his day. He died a slave, buried in an unmarked grave, or perhaps not buried at all. Mother, too, a slave. My son, bless his soul, dumped in a hole someplace, died fighting to free his brothers. And me, well. If Professor gets me anything, let's hope it's a tombstone. Daddy was a good man, a hard worker. A poet in his own right, you know, he could read, and pen a letter. My mother, too. Those were star-crossed lovers if I ever met 'em. Sold apart, never again to see one another in the flesh. When I was a girl, he wrote me something once, it said...it said, "Tell my Little Lizzy to be a good girl, and to learn her book." He wrote. "and not to think that because I am bound so far that God's not able to open the way." ...He died before that way came to pass. Before our good Moses brought down those commandments of Emancipation from that great Capitol Hill. What a man he was, that Abraham Lincoln. Don't tell anybody, but I knew him well. That man... I'm a Professor, and he's six feet under. It's funny how life goes on after the world ends.

ELIZABETH sits on her desk, suddenly realizing  
how vulnerable she's become. She composes  
herself.

ELIZABETH

Well, I guess most of y'all have made yourselves comfortable, huh? End of the day, young people with nothing to do? I don't believe it. Daddy said to learn my book, and I wrote one. It's banned. Banned-banned, like "it's out of print and they burned all the copies" banned. Most of them.

ELIZABETH winks.

ELIZABETH

It's a pretty good read, I mean, if you've got the time... Or, since we're here... I hate to talk about myself, but y'all wanna hear the story?

ELIZABETH waits for applause.

ELIZABETH

Sorry, I can't tell. Is that a yes?

ELIZABETH waits for louder applause.

ELIZABETH

Alright, alright, I'll tell you! It's a little slow to start, but it gets better, I promise.

*In That Day*

ELIZABETH

A LIFETIME  
OF ROMANCE AND SORROW  
OF DAYDREAMS  
OF REALIZED TOMORROWS  
A LIFETIME  
A HUNDRED YEARS  
A HUNDRED WARS  
A HUNDRED TEARS

A HUNDRED PEOPLE  
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE  
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE



IN THAT DAY

Enter WHITE ENSEMBLE, dressed in wealthy  
attire.

WHITE ENSEMBLE

IN THAT DAY  
THERE WERE HORSES AND BUGGIES  
IN THAT DAY  
THERE WERE GALAS AND BALLS  
IN THAT DAY  
THERE WAS HONOR AND GLORY  
IN THAT DAY  
THERE WERE SUMMERS AND FALLS

Enter BLACK ENSEMBLE, slaves and free people  
alike.

BLACK ENSEMBLE

IN THAT DAY  
THERE WAS TRADE ON THE ATLANTIC  
IN THAT DAY  
THERE WERE CRIES OF THE ABUSED  
IN THAT DAY  
THERE WAS SERMON ON SUNDAYS  
IN THAT DAY  
WERE POLICE IN THE PEWS

BLACK ENSEMBLE

IN THAT DAY  
THE NEGROES WERE RISING  
IN THAT DAY  
THEIR CHAINS WERE HARDFAST

WHITE ENSEMBLE

IN THAT DAY  
THE MASTERS WERE KINDER  
IN THAT DAY  
WAS FORGIVEN, THE PAST

ALL

FREEDOM  
HARD TO BE WON  
HARD TO BE WON

FREEDOM  
HARD TO BE WON  
HARD TO BE WON

IN THAT DAY  
BLOOD STAINED THE SOIL

BLACK WOMEN

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

WHITE MEN

FATHERS AND SONS

BLACK ENSEMBLE

THE GENERATIONS  
WAILED FROM THE DITCHES  
THE ANCESTORS  
SCREAMED FROM THE MUD

AND FROM THAT DAY  
OF BONDAGE AND VIOLENCE

WHITE ENSEMBLE

FROM THAT DAY  
OF GOD-GIVEN LAW

The ENSEMBLE converges, hiding ROSE from  
view. ROSE disappears as we enter ELIZABETH's  
memory.

ALL

FROM THAT DAY  
OF RIGHTEOUS CONTENTION  
CAME A VOICE  
TO TELL IT ALL

ELIZABETH

WHITE ENSEMBLE

ELIZABETH KECKLY

ALL

ELIZABETH

BLACK ENSEMBLE

LITTLE LIZZY HOBBS

MARY

ELIZABETH

GOOD FOR NOTHING TURNCOAT

ELIZABETH

LIED BEFORE GOD!

ALL

FREEDOM

HARD TO BE WON

HARD TO BE WON

FREEDOM

HARD TO BE WON

HARD TO BE WON

The ENSEMBLE exits, leaving ELIZABETH  
alone.

ELIZABETH

Welcome to Virginia, somewhere in the 1840s, about. I came upon this Earth free in God-like thought, but fettered in action. A slave. I belonged to a lawyer and his proud and noble family. My sewing kept them alive.

GEORGE (offstage)

Mama!

ELIZABETH

And my little Georgie kept me at the Lord's door.

Enter GEORGE, who runs into ELIZABETH's  
arms.

ELIZABETH

What's wrong?

MASTER GARLAND

Lizzy!

ELIZABETH

What did you say?

Enter MASTER GARLAND

ELIZABETH

Yes, sir?

MASTER GARLAND

Unhand that child at once.

ELIZABETH

What for?

MASTER GARLAND

A lesson in respect.

ELIZABETH

He'll apologize straightaway. Humbly.

GEORGE pouts. ELIZABETH spansks him.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, sir.

MASTER GARLAND

He disrespected my son.

ELIZABETH

How?

MASTER GARLAND

He disrespected me.

ELIZABETH

Hugh is no Master, sir.

MASTER GARLAND wrenches GEORGE from  
ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH

You'd act on his word alone?

MASTER GARLAND

You callin' Hugh a liar?

ELIZABETH

No, sir.

MASTER GARLAND raises his hand.  
ELIZABETH flinches a little.

MASTER GARLAND

That's what I thought.

GEORGE

I didn't mean it, please-

ELIZABETH

It's alright, baby.

GEORGE

Mama!

Exit MASTER GARLAND and GEORGE.  
ELIZABETH looks away.

MISTRESS GARLAND

Lizzy!

Enter MISTRESS GARLAND.

ELIZABETH

Yes, ma'am?

MISTRESS GARLAND talks in an animated fashion, but no sound comes out; ELIZABETH talks over her to the audience.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) I had worked for many women of a certain kind and Mistress Garland was little different. All that was ever required of me, really, was to smile falsely and nod, and appear to take on with great seriousness and gravity the anxieties that weighed the delicate shoulders of The White Lady. Fail to do so, and-

MISTRESS GARLAND gives ELIZABETH a purse.

MISTRESS GARLAND

Don't dawdle now, either. Tonight, I said, the club is tonight. If you disappoint me, Lizzy, I swear-

ELIZABETH

I won't.

MISTRESS GARLAND takes a breath, clutching ELIZABETH as a grounding point. She speaks softly.

MISTRESS GARLAND

You're right. You're right. I should...I should sit down. I mean it, though, Lizzy. Oh, dear...

MISTRESS GARLAND bites her glove.  
ELIZABETH pries herself out of MISTRESS GARLAND's hands with a grimace and ventures into St. Louis, where the ENSEMBLES mill intermixed.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) And then there was the Other World, what appeared to me like a pocket of paradise. In St. Louis, there were colored people- free people, who looked and thought like me. It was bold of me to seek to own anything at that time, but at that time...I wanted to swallow St. Louis whole.

*Free Blacks of St. Louis.*

ELIZABETH

TO ALL WHO KNOW  
MY NAME IS GARLAND'S LIZZY  
OWNED AND NAMED  
LIKE CATTLE OR A MARE

BUT OUT HERE  
I CAN BE MY OWN LIZZY  
AND PASS FOR FREE  
TO ALL THE PEOPLE THERE

ALL THE

BLACK ENSEMBLE

FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS  
LOUIS

ELIZABETH

ALL THE

BLACK ENSEMBLE

FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS

ELIZABETH

WE'RE NEW IN TOWN AND  
NONE WHO LIVE HERE KNOW ME  
ON THE STREET  
I COULD BE ONE OF THEM

MY BOY COULD PLAY  
AND LIVE IN SUCH A CITY  
IF WE WERE FREE  
WE COULD BE PEOPLE THEN

LIKE THE

BLACK ENSEMBLE

FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS  
LOUIS

ELIZABETH

ALL THE

BLACK ENSEMBLE

FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS

BLACK MAN 1

HELLO, MY NAME IS OLSEN  
I RUN A GROCER'S SHOP

BLACK MAN 2

COME BY JOHNSON'S BARBER  
I'LL GIVE YOU A CHOP

AS THE

BLACK ENSEMBLE

FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS  
LOUIS

BLACK MAN 1

WE'RE THE

BLACK ENSEMBLE

FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS

BLACK WOMAN 1

I CAN TEND YOUR LAUNDRY

BLACK WOMAN 2 AND 3

AND WE CAN TEND YOUR BATH

JAMES



HERE'S A LOVELY FLOWER

JAMES offers ELIZABETH a rose.

ELIZABETH

Oh, I can't pay for that.

JAMES

YOU'RE WITH THE

BLACK ENSEMBLE

FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS  
LOUIS

JAMES

WE'RE THE FREE BLACKS OF ST. LOUIS

Go on, take it.

ELIZABETH

That's very kind, but I can't pay.

JAMES

That purse full of rocks?

ELIZABETH

No, my mistress sent me to buy some things, and-

JAMES

A gift.

ELIZABETH

Oh.

ELIZABETH takes the rose.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) I had never met such a man.

JAMES

You've got that green about you.

ELIZABETH

Green?

JAMES

Like a spring day. Can I show you around?

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) He was persistent. He chased me for years, and I took a fancy to him for it.

JAMES

Let me give you the tour.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) He was handsome and he knew it. Charming, and he knew it.

JAMES

Come on, I'll show you the ropes.

ELIZABETH

I can find my own way. (to the audience) And he knew it. But not all was as it seemed. As you can guess, he was a liar, a cheat, and all around a rotten, evil man.

JAMES ensnares ELIZABETH, their dancing now  
a difficult, staggering thing. He's kissing her,  
grabbing her; ELIZABETH is not enjoying herself.

ELIZABETH

And you know what?

ELIZABETH slams her foot on his. JAMES yowls.

ELIZABETH

He wasn't much of a dancer. Or a husband, for that matter.

JAMES stumbles, exiting.

JAMES

Ain't seen the last of me, woman!

ELIZABETH

Ain't smelled the last of you, either!

ELIZABETH wafts the stench of alcohol out of her  
face. She shudders.

ELIZABETH

After I handled the "husband," I had yet another man in my life to take care of. –Not like that.  
My son. A teenager, now, and not so quick to grab at my skirts for comfort as he was to scowl  
upon my face.

Enter OLDER GEORGE. The ENSEMBLE  
continues milling about.

OLDER GEORGE

Why are we dawdling out here?

ELIZABETH

Georgie-

OLDER GEORGE

Stop calling me that.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Whittaker should meet us here soon.

OLDER GEORGE

Have me followin' you like a mule on a lead.

ELIZABETH

Some might take that lead and string you up by it.

OLDER GEORGE

I'm smarter than that.

ELIZABETH

Smart enough to act right, or enough not to get caught?

OLDER GEORGE

Ain't followin' nobody.

ELIZABETH

Won't be kept by nobody either. A free man, George Keckly.

OLDER GEORGE

Kirkland.

ELIZABETH

Excuse me?

OLDER GEORGE

I go by my white name.

ELIZABETH

Half white.

OLDER GEORGE

Half free.

ELIZABETH

Half black.

OLDER GEORGE

I should've been born free. I have free blood in me, I should be free.

ELIZABETH

Stick with me and you will. (to the audience) Like it or not, he was still a boy deep down. Rowdy and restless with a bleeding heart.

GEORGE flips a coin.

ELIZABETH

One silver piece was all it would take for us to board a ferry and cross the river. A hundred silver pieces would purchase our freedom papers and a ferry. Lucky for me, George had enough sense to know that.

OLDER GEORGE

How many we got?

ELIZABETH

Not enough. Mistress Garland says if we get six testaments to our good character, she'll let us work to raise it.

OLDER GEORGE

And work here, too? My grandchildren will be dead before we make, what? A thousand dollars?

ELIZABETH

Thirteen hundred. And no, not here. In the city. New York.

GEORGE drops his disinterested facade.

OLDER GEORGE

New York City?

ELIZABETH

If we get six testaments signed.

OLDER GEORGE

How many we got of them?

ELIZABETH hides a grin.

ELIZABETH

Here, I'll check. One...here, hold this.

ELIZABETH rummages through her bag. She  
hands GEORGE a paper. She counts them  
theatrically.

ELIZABETH

One, two, three, four...

OLDER GEORGE

Oh my Lord.

ELIZABETH

We got five, baby.

GEORGE looks through them incredulously. He  
looks at his mother.

OLDER GEORGE

That's...that's one more.

ELIZABETH

You'll get a job, ride the train, meet city girls-

OLDER GEORGE cringes.

OLDER GEORGE

Ugh, Ma, no-

ELIZABETH

A free man, George...Kirkland, if that's what you choose.

OLDER GEORGE hugs his mother desperately.  
ELIZABETH is shocked; she doesn't know what to  
do with her hands. Before she can respond,  
GEORGE lets her go. He straightens himself out  
and composes himself.

OLDER GEORGE

We can't do no thousand dollars- thirteen hundred, whatever -but we can do this. One more.

WHITE MAN, Mr. Whittaker, enters.

WHITE MAN

Sorry for the wait, the missus had a screw loose.

ELIZABETH

I understand.

WHITE MAN

You have that pledge-testament thing? The paper?

ELIZABETH

Yes, sir. Thank you so much.

ELIZABETH fishes for the last paper out of her bag. WHITE MAN purses his lips. Flustered, ELIZABETH looks faster. GEORGE flips through the papers he has and comes up with a blank one.

OLDER GEORGE

Mama.

ELIZABETH stops, she takes a great sigh of relief. GEORGE hands the paper to the WHITE MAN. He signs it with a ballpoint pen from his jacket and hands it back.

WHITE MAN

Bye-bye, now, Lizzy. George.

ELIZABETH

Promise to keep my word.

WHITE MAN shakes their hands.

WHITE MAN

We'll see.

ELIZABETH

How d'you mean?

WHITE MAN

Nothing by it, we'll just have to see.

ELIZABETH

See what?

WHITE MAN

You know, if you'll come back. Pay the debt with that city money.

WHITE MAN shrugs.

ELIZABETH

If I don't, you'll be stuck with the sum!

WHITE MAN

So?

ELIZABETH

So I owe it to you to stick by my word.

OLDER GEORGE

Ma, it's fine.

ELIZABETH

You think I'd swindle you outta thirteen hundred dollars!

OLDER GEORGE

Mama-

WHITE MAN

Those Northern folk'll switch you up on us.

ELIZABETH

I've been a Southerner my whole life!

OLDER GEORGE

Just say thank you-

WHITE MAN

A cow can't call herself a farmer.

ELIZABETH

Let me see that pen.

OLDER GEORGE

Mama, don't!

ELIZABETH tries to take the pen. OLDER  
GEORGE snatches the paper from her.  
ELIZABETH and GEORGE fight over it.

OLDER GEORGE

Mama. Don't do this.



ELIZABETH

He doesn't trust us!

The paper tears in half. OLDER GEORGE falls to his knees, staring at it. ELIZABETH goes pale. WHITE MAN exits with a half-hearted wave.

OLDER GEORGE

You couldn't let this one thing go.

ELIZABETH

What else do we have if not our names?

OLDER GEORGE

I have nothing! And thanks to that little show you put on, that's all I'll ever have.

OLDER GEORGE and ELIZABETH stare at each other. ELIZABETH does not give.

OLDER GEORGE

Your stubbornness'll be the death of you.

ELIZABETH

Not if you get me first.

GEORGE, hurt, starts to walk off when he's interrupted by three fussy WHITE WOMEN.

OLDER GEORGE

Excuse me, ladies—

GEORGE makes an effort to give them a wide berth, but they usher him back to his mother.

WHITE WOMAN 1

Hush, hush, hush, nonsense! Hello, Lizzy!

WHITE WOMAN 3

We need to see you, too. Be a good boy, now.

WHITE WOMAN 2

Tell her!

WHITE WOMAN 1

We've solved your problem.

WHITE WOMAN 2

We all know how hard you work, so...

WHITE WOMAN 1

WHITE WOMAN 2

WHITE WOMAN 3

We got the money for you!

We set up a fundraiser!

All you have to do is  
accept!

ELIZABETH

One at a time, please!

WHITE WOMAN 3

We have the money under your name. It's at the bank.

ELIZABETH

What money?

WHITE WOMAN 2

You know what this means, right?

OLDER GEORGE

How much more do we need?

WHITE WOMEN shake their heads, giggling.

WHITE WOMAN 3

You don't need any more.

ELIZABETH

I don't understand.

OLDER GEORGE  
We accept!

WHITE WOMAN 1  
It's done!

WHITE WOMAN 2  
Freedom's got your name on it.

WHITE WOMAN 1 takes ELIZABETH's hands in  
hers.

WHITE WOMAN 1  
You're free.

OLDER GEORGE picks up WHITE WOMAN 2  
and spins her, delighted.

OLDER GEORGE  
We're free!

ELIZABETH watches GEORGE, still unsure but  
moved by his joy. She swallows and nods, head  
down, humbled.  
*Free Blacks of St. Louis (Reprise)*

ELIZABETH  
TO ALL WHO KNOW  
I'M NO MORE GARLAND'S LIZZY  
OWNED AND NAMED  
LIKE CATTLE OR A MARE

TODAY  
I CAN BE MY OWN LIZZY

ENSEMBLE  
BECAUSE YOU'RE FREE  
FREE

The ENSEMBLE changes ELIZABETH out of her  
slaves clothes into those of a nothern lady, a  
middle-class free woman. OLDER GEORGE  
changes into a Union Army uniform, marching to  
the music. ELIZABETH waves and blows a kiss.  
The music cuts off with a gunshot. OLDER  
GEORGE stumbles back and exits.

ELIZABETH

George!

ELIZABETH sits in her grief, the refrain of the  
music playing as she weeps alone.

ELIZABETH

(quietly, to the audience) To have a child is to take your heart out of your body and watch it learn  
to walk on its own, traipsing along outside you like it knows something. But the heart doesn't  
know. The heart doesn't know a damned thing.

ELIZABETH picks herself up. As she straightens  
up, the space becomes MARY's chamber in the  
White House, a packaged dress placed in her hand  
by the ENSEMBLE.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) There was more for me than what I'd lost. After George passed, all I had was  
that name I touted so high back then. My name. Eventually, I found myself in the contractual  
employ of-

MARY (offstage)

I cannot!

ANNE (offstage)

Mary, please.

ELIZABETH

The First Lady.

MARY

It cannot be! I have nothing to wear and furthermore-

ANNE

The address won't begin for another half hour at least.

Enter WILLIE, wrapped in a blanket. ELIZABETH  
is stunned, as though she's seen a ghost.

WILLIE

Mother?

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) His eyes, his nose, his loose curl. My heart stood before me, bundled in a cotton linen, clean and white like an angel. But my boy was gone now, and he didn't look at me. His gaze was fixed...on his mother, in a way no child would ever look at me again.

MARY

My poor Willie is ill! He needs his mother, he needs- (noticing ELIZABETH) Mrs. Keckley. You have disappointed me- deceived me. Why do you bring me my dress at this late hour?

ELIZABETH

I just finished it, I thought I was on time.

MARY cuddles WILLIE somewhat oppressively-  
performatively.

MARY

Disturbing my children, no less... You are not in time, Mrs. Keckly; you have bitterly disappointed me. I've no time now to dress, and, what's more, I will not dress.

ELIZABETH

Let me. I'll have you ready in a few minutes.

MARY

No. I stay in my room- better yet, I stay with my son in his hour of distress. Mr. Lincoln can go alone.

ANNE

The good doctor said Willie'd make a quick recovery.

WILLIE

Mother?

ELIZABETH

I'll stay with him. I'll dress you, you'll go to your party, and I'll take care of things here. (to the audience) I was ready to make almost any sacrifice consistent with propriety.

MARY

You stay with him?

ELIZABETH

Provided you let me fulfill my contract.

MARY

You dress me, yes, but you stay also?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

MARY

I have your word?

ELIZABETH

Yes, ma'am.

MARY

Get on with it then, and be timely. Willie, dear, go lay down. Anne, ensure my son is put to bed.

ELIZABETH gently nudges WILLIE out of the way and begins dressing MARY and placing flowers in her hair.

WILLIE

I'm not tired.

MARY

--And careful, mind you, a lady cannot be in haste. The vultures can tell.

WILLIE

Mother?

ELIZABETH

Vultures?

MARY

The party-goers, the- the audience. They've gathered to feast upon me and my dear husband.

WILLIE

Mother, I will not go to bed! I'm to hear Father speak, he promised!

ABRAHAM

...The husband, that mother and infant who blessed;  
Each, all, are away to their dwelling of rest.

MARY

Oh, God.

Enter ABRAHAM, greeting each of the women  
with some flair, but aiming his poetic compliments  
at his wife, who was not charmed.

ABRAHAM

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,  
Shone beauty and pleasure - her triumphs are by;

WILLIE

Father!

MARY

If you won't lay down, then do sit, child.

ABRAHAM

And the memory of those who loved her and praised,  
Are alike from the minds of the living.

WILLIE pouts and sits on the sofa. ABRAHAM  
casts himself back on the same sofa, squishing  
WILLIE. WILLIE laughs uproariously trying to get  
out.

ABRAHAM

Erased.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) I had never met such a man.

WILLIE

You're heavy!

ABRAHAM

Heavy with the weight of my...well, my mind, little one.

ABRAHAM rescues WILLIE and puts him on his  
lap. WILLIE leans back comfortably.

MARY

What is your mind addled with today, Father?

ABRAHAM

Why, Mother! To have a mind is to be addled, I would say.

WILLIE coughs.

ABRAHAM

Alright, Willie-boy. It is late.

WILLIE

Impossible.

ABRAHAM

Alas, it may seem so, but it is. Come, now.

ABRAHAM begins to take WILLIE to exit.

MARY

Let Anne do that, I need you.

ABRAHAM

Only a few minutes-

MARY



Anne!

ANNE jolts. She takes WILLIE's hand.  
ABRAHAM reluctantly lets him go. He kneels to  
WILLIE's level quickly.

ABRAHAM

Your bedsheets are the turret waves; dream with your sailboats all about them, battling pirates  
and fishing for wishes, hm? I love you.

ABRAHAM kisses WILLIE's forehead. WILLIE  
hugs his father's neck. ABRAHAM smiles curtly,  
aware of MARY's eyes on him. ABRAHAM  
stands; WILLIE and ANNE exit.

MARY

You seem to be in a poetical mood tonight.

ABRAHAM

Yes, mother, these are poetical times. --You look charming in that dress. Mrs. Keckly has met  
with great...success.

ABRAHAM smiles wide, waiting for a reaction.  
MARY, determined no to give it to him, folds.

MARY

Yes, father, I did hear.

ABRAHAM

I should hope, for all the chatter coming from this room. --I jest. Really, Mrs. Keckly, you've  
outdone yourself.

MARY

Pray the scavenging crowd agrees.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) They were a peculiar couple, like a hunter gifted an old hound. She may order  
him, but all he wanted was a good scratch behind the ears and a bit of bacon. Peculiarity aside,  
no queen could have carried herself with more calmness and dignity than Mary Lincoln. She was  
confident and self-possessed, and confidence always gives grace.

MARY

Our audience awaits.

MARY and ABRAHAM exit.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) But it wasn't long before her heart left her, too.

Enter MARY and ABRAHAM in mourning clothes,  
MARY wailing and screaming in grief before a bed.

On it lies the sheet-shrouded figure of a child,  
WILLIE. ELIZABETH sits at the bedside like a  
guardian in a tomb.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) He was his mother's favorite child.

ABRAHAM tries to hold MARY, but she launches  
away from him. ABRAHAM watches in horror as  
she crumples, weeping, into the sofa. ANNE enters  
and attends her, leaving ABRAHAM to stare  
horrified at his dead son. ELIZABETH watches as  
ABRAHAM lifts the shroud with trembling hands.  
His sobs echo in the deafened hall.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) Little Willie died in the house, in his bed, amid his sailboats. I tended to him in his final hours, and after. It sickens me to remember.

ELIZABETH chokes up, as if ill.

ABRAHAM

For God gave his only begotten Son...to think God can suffer a pain such as this, and live?

ELIZABETH

...You will live, Mr. Lincoln.

ABRAHAM

How?

ELIZABETH

I lost my George in a battle in Missouri last year.

ABRAHAM

How can that be?

ELIZABETH

He passed as white.

ABRAHAM

Your husband?

ELIZABETH

My son. George was one of the first to... for the Union.

ABRAHAM

He must have been brave.

ELIZABETH

For all the good times we had, those aren't the ones that...

ABRAHAM

Haunt you.

ELIZABETH

Willie was young. He still loved you.

ABRAHAM

I'd rather he hate me and live.

ELIZABETH

That's not up to us.

ABRAHAM

More fathers and mothers than I'll ever know have lost sons in this war, and with such hubris...  
It's only fair we're among them.

ELIZABETH

Since when is life fair?

ABRAHAM

Still, I hoped foolishly.

ELIZABETH

Hope may be foolish, but it's no sin.

ABRAHAM

...I know that he's better off in heaven, but -

ABRAHAM cries openly over the body of his son,  
ELIZABETH suddenly a part of this strange,  
horrible moment. She begins to leave when  
ABRAHAM takes hold of her skirt. Realizing what  
he's done, ABRAHAM takes back his hand. The  
image of Abraham Lincoln at the feet of a black  
woman.

ELIZABETH hesitantly returns to his side, the only  
one to comfort him in his grief.

ABRAHAM

There was no patriot like Baker,  
So noble and so true;  
He fell as a soldier on the field,  
His face to the sky of blue.

ELIZABETH

Another of your poems?

ABRAHAM

Willie's. He sent it to me a few days ago. It could be about your son.

ELIZABETH

Could be about anyone. George had rhymes, too. "Howdy, Mr. Jay. You're a tell-tale-tell. You  
play the spy each day, then carry tales t'hell."

ABRAHAM

That's morbid.

ELIZABETH

The blue jays tell the devil all the naughty mischief little ones get up to- that's how mama knows.  
We got eyes in the sky.

ABRAHAM

Thus making you the devil-figure in this story?

ELIZABETH

I happen to catch 'em for a moment on their way down. Little birdies in my ear.

ABRAHAM

Are you...sad?

ELIZABETH

I can't cry anymore.

ABRAHAM

What else is there to do?

ELIZABETH

...My mother used to tell me we put our sorrows on the wind. Sing the old songs.

ABRAHAM

Do the birds take those, too?

ELIZABETH

At least they listen.

ABRAHAM

I'm listening.

ELIZABETH considers. She shakes her head.

ABRAHAM

What was he like?

ELIZABETH

Charming. Funny. Proud and stubborn as a mule, but he got that from me.

ABRAHAM

Willie's so sweet. Was.

ELIZABETH  
It's no wonder. He had you.

ABRAHAM  
It's a...a void in my chest. A chasm.

ELIZABETH  
Feels like your body's a tomb.

ABRAHAM  
An empty one. It's wrong.

ELIZABETH  
Parents should never bury their children.

ABRAHAM chokes.

ABRAHAM  
He's afraid of the dark.

ELIZABETH  
Mr. Lincoln-

ABRAHAM  
I won't put him down there, he...he'll be frightened.

ELIZABETH  
Willie won't be frightened anymore.

ABRAHAM  
He wouldn't like being in a...hole...

ELIZABETH  
Buried in sacred ground. It'll put his soul to rest.

ABRAHAM  
Sacred ground.

ELIZABETH

Sacred ground.

*Left Behind.*

ABRAHAM

DEATH IS LIKE A DOOR  
TO THE OTHER SIDE  
ONCE WE GO THROUGH IT  
IT DISAPPEARS BEFORE OUR EYES  
HEAVEN'S GATES ARE LOCKED  
FROM THE INSIDE  
WHAT IS THERE FOR US  
WHO WERE LEFT BEHIND?

ELIZABETH

LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
AND DOWNTRODDEN

ABRAHAM

DEAD AND GONE  
DEAD AND GONE  
BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

ELIZABETH/ABRAHAM

WHAT IS THERE FOR US  
WHO WERE LEFT BEHIND?  
HOW CAN WE GO ON  
WHEN OTHERS SHUT THE DOOR  
AND LOCKED IT TIGHT  
HOW ARE WE TO COPE  
WHEN THERE'S NO END IN SIGHT  
WHAT ARE WE TO DO?  
MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT?  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
  
LEFT BEHIND

LEFT BEHIND

ABRAHAM

AND DOWNTRODDEN  
DEAD AND GONE  
DEAD AND GONE

ELIZABETH

BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

ELIZABETH/ABRAHAM

WHAT IS THERE FOR US  
WHO WERE LEFT BEHIND?  
HOW CAN WE GO ON  
WHEN OTHERS SHUT THE DOOR  
AND LOCKED IT TIGHT  
HOW ARE WE TO COPE  
WHEN THERE'S NO END IN SIGHT  
WHAT ARE WE TO DO?  
MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT?  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND

ABRAHAM

DEATH IS LIKE A DOOR  
TO THE OTHER SIDE

ELIZABETH

ONCE WE GO THROUGH IT  
IT DISAPPEARS BEFORE OUR EYES

ABRAHAM

HEAVEN'S GATES ARE LOCKED  
FROM THE INSIDE

ELIZABETH

TOGETHER WE CAN BRAVE THE STORM



ABRAHAM

TOGETHER WE CAN BE ALRIGHT

ELIZABETH/ABRAHAM

WHAT IS THERE FOR US  
WHO WERE LEFT BEHIND?  
AT LEAST WE HAVE OTHERS  
WHO'VE SEEN THE DOOR  
IN ALL IT'S LIGHT  
TOGETHER WE CAN COPE  
THERE'S AN END IN SIGHT  
WHAT ARE WE TO DO BUT  
MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND  
LEFT BEHIND

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) Genius and greatness weeping over love's idol lost. This image haunts me to this day.

The scene fades. Exit ABRAHAM, but  
ELIZABETH remains. MARY enters, dressed in  
black, followed by ANNE.

MARY

I don't care! He was my son! I say what he wanted and what he loathed, and I say the flowers must go!

ANNE

They've been ordered for th' funeral, ma'am.

MARY

If there are flowers present, I won't be. Lizzy?

ELIZABETH

Ma'am?

MARY

Undress me at once.

ELIZABETH

I don't think-

MARY struggles to undress herself, wrenching the dress off. She gives up, collapsing in tears.  
ELIZABETH and ANNE try to help.

MARY

Don't touch me. (to ANNE) Get out.

ANNE

Yes, ma'am.

MARY

Get out!

ANNE exits, scurrying.

ELIZABETH

You need to attend his funeral, Mary. You'll regret it.

MARY

What do you know? You're not a mother!

Enter ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM

That's a cruel thing to say.

MARY

No one understands my pain.

ABRAHAM

You certainly don't understand mine.

MARY

What is that supposed to mean?

ABRAHAM

Please get dressed.

MARY

You have something to say, go on.

ABRAHAM

The casket flowers stay.

MARY

I cannot bear them.

ABRAHAM

They're lilies, Mary. They're his favorite.

MARY

He was my favorite! The only good thing you ever gave me, and now-

ABRAHAM

You don't mean that.

MARY

You weren't there for him.

ABRAHAM

I beg your pardon?

MARY

You weren't there for me-

ABRAHAM

I'm right here!

MARY

You only care about yourself!

MARY bursts into tears and exits.

ABRAHAM

What-

ELIZABETH

Pay her no mind.

ABRAHAM

Only care about- what does she think I do all day?

ELIZABETH

Gossip about her while you and the cabinet braid each others' hair.

ABRAHAM snorts. He covers his face and groans.

ABRAHAM

How am I supposed to-

ELIZABETH

The funeral?

ABRAHAM

Exactly.

ELIZABETH

Go without her.

ABRAHAM

But-

ELIZABETH

I know.

ABRAHAM throws himself back on the sofa,  
covering his face.

ABRAHAM

Abraham Lincoln, his hand and pen,  
He will be good but God knows when.

ELIZABETH

Are you skipping, too?

I'll go. ABRAHAM

When? ELIZABETH

When I'm well. You said I would be. ABRAHAM

I said you would live. ELIZABETH

Well, when I live again, I'll go. ...What? ABRAHAM

You must live now. ELIZABETH

ABRAHAM smooths his hair.

Even with hair like this? ABRAHAM

Maybe not. ELIZABETH

If it weren't for this darned cowlick... ABRAHAM

Sit. ELIZABETH

ABRAHAM sits.

Comb? ELIZABETH

On that desk there. ABRAHAM

ELIZABETH fetches the comb and carefully fixes  
his messy hair.

ABRAHAM

It's strange to be so formal.

ELIZABETH

It's a funeral.

ABRAHAM

Between us.

ELIZABETH

Mrs. Lincoln calls me Lizzy.

ABRAHAM

For Elizabeth, yes?

ELIZABETH

Mhmm.

ABRAHAM

Elizabeth, then. Madam Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH scoffs in bewilderment.

ELIZABETH

If I'm a Madam to you, you must be- you must be a great Pharaoh of Egypt.

ABRAHAM

The Bible's Pharaoh was a proud and unruly man.

ELIZABETH

With unruly hair?

ABRAHAM

I believe he was, in fact, bald. But you are yet a madam, Madam.

ELIZABETH

If you insist, Mr. President.

ABRAHAM

I do.

ABRAHAM picks up a Bible. A moment.

ABRAHAM

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.

ELIZABETH

Job?

ABRAHAM

He rent his mantle and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground to worship.

ELIZABETH

We're back to the bald head, it must be destiny.

ABRAHAM

The first bald president. (sadly)...I'm no Pharaoh, Madam Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

What are you?

ABRAHAM

A father.

ELIZABETH

...Abraham in the Bible was the Father of Israel.

ABRAHAM

He sacrificed his boy for God.

ELIZABETH

God stopped him.

ABRAHAM

He didn't stop me.

ELIZABETH

What do you mean?

ABRAHAM

Nothing, it's nothing. Ramblings of a deranged mind, pay no attention.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Lincoln?

ABRAHAM

Abraham.

ELIZABETH

Abraham... Have you prayed?

ABRAHAM

For Willie? Yes. And for Mary, though I doubt she appreciates it.

ELIZABETH

She does.

ABRAHAM

She couldn't care less.

ELIZABETH

You think so little of her faith?

ABRAHAM

That woman curses the Lord like breathing. I love her, but she makes things so-

MARY wails offstage.

ABRAHAM

Excuse me. Mary?

ABRAHAM stands to leave but MARY enters,  
disheveled and carrying fistfuls of flowers, makeup  
streaked with tears.

ABRAHAM

What have you done?



MARY

They're everywhere!

MARY throws the flowers on the ground,  
disgusted. ABRAHAM goes to hug her.

MARY

This is your fault. You got him that pony for his birthday and he caught cold riding it. You killed him! And you mock me with these flowers, everywhere, everywhere!

ABRAHAM

How can you say that?

MARY

They're laughing at my grief, everyone.

ABRAHAM

How dare you accuse me- It's unspeakable!

MARY

It was your fault.

ABRAHAM

You're the one who suggested the pony!

MARY

You bought it!

ABRAHAM

He loved that horse, Mary. You know he did.

MARY

You should've known.

ABRAHAM

How could I?

MARY takes a vase of flowers off the mantle. She  
shatters it on the floor.

MARY

It was you! You should have known better! You should have talked me out of it, I-

ABRAHAM reaches for her. MARY slaps him  
away and exits with a door slam. ABRAHAM sinks  
into a chair.

ELIZABETH

She's wrong to say such things.

ABRAHAM

She has a point.

ELIZABETH

You didn't do anything.

ABRAHAM

I bought the horse, I let him ride it...

ELIZABETH

And the rest?

ABRAHAM

The prophet, Abraham, was stopped in the nick of time, his blade hovering at the highest peak in the man's arc of motion. One moment more and that blade would have driven into the beating heart of his only child, but God. Stopped. Him. Here am I, at the height of my career, the peak of my ascension, I, a knife. Yet God did not stop the hand wielding me.

ABRAHAM waits to ELIZABETH to understand,  
but she only stares at him in fear and concern. He  
takes a breath and walks the stage, occupying  
moments. ELIZABETH's eyes follow him.  
Eventually, he picks up a lily from the vase MARY  
smashed earlier.  
*What Happens to Flowers.*

ABRAHAM

I LIKE TO READ ABOUT DYING

ELIZABETH

ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS  
WHEN WE'RE GONE

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

BECAUSE I HOPE IT'S NOT SO BAD  
AS WHAT'S DOWN HERE UPON THE SOD

ABRAHAM

I LIKE TO LOOK AT FLOWERS

ELIZABETH

WATCH THEM GROW AND BLOOM AND FADE

ABRAHAM

AND SEE THE POETRY  
LIKE THE BOOKS I READ

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

IN THE WORLD OUR GOD HAS MADE

ABRAHAM

I MIGHT BE MELANCHOLY, LONESOME

ELIZABETH

BUT YOU SEE WHAT THE WORLD COULD BE

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

WHAT THE WORLD COULD BE  
IF EVERYONE COULD SEE

WHAT HAPPENS TO FLOWERS  
WHAT HAPPENS TO ROSES, VIOLETS, FAIR  
THE WAY THEY RISE UP TO THE SUN  
AND NEVER MAKE IT THERE  
WHAT HAPPENS TO TULIPS  
WHAT HAPPENS TO BIRDS AND BEES AND DEER  
AND ALL THE CREATURES OF THIS EARTH  
WE HOLD SO DEAR

ABRAHAM

MY SON LOVED FLOWERS  
HE LOVED ALL LIFE AND LIGHT ABOVE

ELIZABETH

DESPITE THE CHALLENGE  
THAT LOSING THEM WOULD POSE

ABRAHAM

MY SON LOVED FLOWERS  
HE LOVED THE JOY THAT THEY SEND

ELIZABETH

YOU COULD DIE TOMORROW  
ANY DAY COULD BE YOUR END

ABRAHAM

SO MANY BROKEN HEARTS TO MEND

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

WHAT HAPPENS TO FLOWERS  
WHAT HAPPENS TO ROSES, VIOLETS, FAIR  
THE WAY THEY RISE UP TO THE SUN  
AND NEVER MAKE IT THERE  
WHAT HAPPENS TO TULIPS  
WHAT HAPPENS TO BIRDS AND BEES AND DEER  
AND ALL THE CREATURES OF THIS EARTH  
WE HOLD SO DEAR

ELIZABETH

WE ALL SEE THE THINGS WE CHERISH  
WITHER AWAY

ABRAHAM

BUT LOVING THEM IS ALWAYS WORTH  
THE PAIN

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

THERE IS BEAUTY TO BE SEEN

IN THE POETRY OF THESE  
WHO WE'VE LOST

ABRAHAM

THINK NOT OF LOSS

ELIZABETH

THINK NOT OF LOSS

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

THINK NOT OF LOSS  
BUT OF LOVE  
AND WHAT HAPPENS TO FLOWERS  
WHAT HAPPENS TO ROSES, VIOLETS, FAIR  
THE WAY THEY RISE UP TO THE SUN  
AND

ELIZABETH

RISE UP TO THE SUN AND

ABRAHAM

BLOOM

ELIZABETH

It's time.

ELIZABETH hands him his coat.

ABRAHAM

What about you?

ELIZABETH

I wouldn't miss it.

ABRAHAM

I'll be alone up there, and...I'd like you to join me. You should stand with the family.

ELIZABETH

But Mary won't-

So? ABRAHAM

I can't stand in Mary's place. ELIZABETH

Take yours. ABRAHAM

You forget the press. ELIZABETH

Who cares? ABRAHAM

How about I go up near the end? When people are leaving. ELIZABETH

You'll stand by me? ABRAHAM

ELIZABETH nods.

Good. ABRAHAM

ABRAHAM offers his arm. ELIZABETH hesitates.

Abraham... ELIZABETH

Oh, alright. After you. ABRAHAM

ELIZABETH takes her coat and hat; ABRAHAM dons his hat and stops. He offers the funeral lily to ELIZABETH. She takes it. They leave one after the other.

The night passes into the day. ELIZABETH enters wearing a new dress, hat, and shawl.

BLACK ENSEMBLE enter after her, weary  
refugees of the war humming in unison to the march  
of their feet.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) The Civil War raged. As the Union pillaged the South, robbing it of beauty and ravaging whatever Godliness it had left, freed slaves ran north with nothing behind them, nothing with them, and nothing waiting for them upon their arrival to the promised land.

*The Freedmen*

BLACK ENSEMBLE

THE DAYS ARE UNKIND  
TO THE NEGRO  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
FREE TO BE POOR  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
FREE TO BE STARVING  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
FREE TO BE IGNORED

OH, WHERE IS MY SAVIOR?  
OH, WHERE IS MY PEACE?  
OH, WHERE IS MY SOLACE?  
OH, WHERE'S MY RELEASE?  
OH, WHERE IS THE DE-CEN-CY  
OH, WHERE IN THE WORLD?

THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) I hear them now. I bet I'll always hear them, crying to God for help they should have been able to provide for themselves.

MARY stands as ELIZABETH fits a dress to her  
body.

MARY

The city is positively overrun, slaves languishing in the streets.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) Did I mention Mrs. Lincoln was of wealthy Southern origin?

MARY

They come without the faintest idea of how Northern society works, and then- this!

ELIZABETH

It's freedom they don't understand.

MARY

I hardly understand Northern society myself. We Southern girls have to stick together.

ELIZABETH

They've gone from being fed and clothed and worked to death to being abandoned and left for dead.

MARY

We'll simply have to adapt- all of us, nigger or not.

Tension.

ELIZABETH

I'd be greatly obliged if you refrained from that word.

MARY

It isn't very ladylike, is it?

ELIZABETH

Erase it from your vocabulary entirely.

MARY

I'll do my best.

ELIZABETH

It'll be a powerful example.

MARY

The freedmen will manage. Look at you! You've done fabulously for yourself so far.



ELIZABETH

A little help never hurt anybody.(to the audience) Mrs. Farnham. A friend of Mrs. Lincoln, hosted festivals to raise money for wounded soldiers. White ones, anyway. Which got me thinking: (to MARY) Would people give charity to the freedmen if there were a more organized way of doing it?

MARY

Would you? ...Can I move?

ELIZABETH

If you're careful.

MARY hobbles to a writing desk and pulls out a cheque book. She writes out a cheque.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) Freedom without support is criminal, but it's the burden of community. St. Louis did it for me- why not repay the debt in Washington?

MARY offers the cheque to ELIZABETH.

MARY

For your organization. Consider me your first beneficiary.

ELIZABETH

Thank you. The colored people of Washington D.C. thank you. The colored people of the whole United States.

MARY

I am the Lady President, after all. I should hope they do. Oh, this is all so exciting. And Lizzy?

ELIZABETH

Yes, ma'am?

MARY

Do try to be a little less sensitive in the future, hm? We ladies have our decorum.

ELIZABETH

...Yes, ma'am, we do.

MARY admires herself in the mirror.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) I called it the Contraband Relief Association, donations to which came from everywhere. From colored churches here in America, from England and Scotland across the sea, from Frederick Douglass, from Abraham Lincoln himself.

MARY

Where is my husband?

ELIZABETH

I can't say that I know.

MARY

Anne! Anne, where is my husband? Anne!

Enter ANNE.

ANNE

Ma'am?

MARY

Mr. Lincoln, you silly girl, where is he? Where is he, are you deaf?

ANNE

No, ma'am. I'm sorry, ma'am. He's out on presidential business, ma'am.

MARY

And so your uselessness exhibits itself yet again.

ELIZABETH

Wait-

MARY moves sharply, sticking herself with the pins  
holding fabric to her body.

MARY

Of all the infernal curses of aristocracy and intelligence, look what you've made me do! I go to accomplish your simple job and look- behold! Anne, oh, you horrid girl.

MARY weeps. ANNE exits.

ELIZABETH

It's not so bad yet. If you'd stand still-

MARY

It's no use. Get me out of this.

ELIZABETH unpins the dress, freeing MARY from  
the fabric.

MARY

Tend to your sewing. Over there, I don't know.

ELIZABETH finds a seat and prepares to stitch.

MARY

I wouldn't be lonesome if my husband were here.

ELIZABETH

Ma'am?

MARY

He's gone! He's always gone, leaving me in my distress to worry over him and meander about.  
Aimlessly!

ABRAHAM enters.

ABRAHAM

What's this about meandering aimlessly?

MARY

Nothing.

ABRAHAM

Didn't sound like nothing.

MARY

Well, it is.

ABRAHAM  
I only have a few moments, so-

MARY  
So, what?

ABRAHAM  
What'd you call me for?

MARY  
Why only a few moments?

ABRAHAM  
I have work, dearest.

MARY  
What if I had marvelous news?

ABRAHAM  
I'd like to hear it.

MARY  
And then be off to the wind, ne'er to be seen again!

ABRAHAM  
What are you talking about?

MARY  
Where are you going?

ABRAHAM  
The War Room?

MARY  
Aha! You're always going there. It must be nice, surrounding yourself with people who listen to you.

ABRAHAM  
I do more of the listening, actually.

MARY

Moving all your little pawns in this silly game of yours.

ABRAHAM

This is no game, Mary. People are dying, losing their homes. It's my duty to this nation-

MARY

What about your duty to your wife?

ABRAHAM

What about it?

MARY

You never cease to amaze me. What about it, he asks. What about it! All you care about is playing hero-

ABRAHAM

I'm a steward for the heroes laying down their lives for this country!

MARY

Your poetry's going to get you killed someday, you know that?

ABRAHAM

I will take that into consideration, thank you.

ABRAHAM starts for the door.

MARY

Wait.

ABRAHAM

We're at an impasse.

MARY

Answer me this: who will be at the meeting?

ABRAHAM

We've talked enough.

MARY

A simple question, unless you have some secret that can't grace my ears without consequence?

ABRAHAM

You're bombarding me in the public, mother.

MARY

Lizzy is not the public.

ABRAHAM

Why concern yourself with presidential business?

MARY

Who granted you this position?

ABRAHAM

The citizens of the United States.

MARY

You would be nothing without my connections.

ABRAHAM

Would you care to elaborate?

MARY

You couldn't fathom what I've done to get you where you are.

ABRAHAM

What good's a president without his advisors?

MARY

What good is a king?

ABRAHAM

How very patriotic.

MARY

You should have been born a saint. Don't you think so, Lizzy?

ELIZABETH

Mr. Lincoln is a good man.

MARY

Is that your opinion?

ELIZABETH

...A good man, of good judgment.

ABRAHAM

Your vote of confidence is appreciated.

MARY

Those hypocrites twine you around their fingers like a skein of thread.

ABRAHAM

Your prejudices can't change my opinion.

MARY

Fools, the both of you. Saintly fools.

ABRAHAM and MARY exit. ELIZABETH billows  
out the dress she's been working on in the corner.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) And so it went. Dresses and dinners and dresses and parties and dresses. Days in the parlor when Mrs. Lincoln called me for company, and while I had other business, she never cared much about inconveniencing me.

ELIZABETH dons her hat and shawl, prepared to  
leave.

ELIZABETH

I always made my deadlines and my friendly visits alike, however. There wasn't much choice. I was forced to take on assistants and apprentices to keep up with my workload. In the meantime, however, our people suffered with a salary less than a slave.

A poor, elderly BLACK WOMAN enters.

BLACK WOMAN

Why, Ms. Lizzy, you ain't get a shift from Mr. and Mrs. Gov'ment!

ELIZABETH

No, ma'am, what of it?

BLACK WOMAN

I been up North more'n a eight months and Bliss God, children, if I had know that Mr. and Mrs. Gov'ment was going to do that a'way, I never would have comed here in God's world.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) You all may be a bit young to remember this. On the Southern plantation, it was proper that a mistress made presents of much-needed undergarments.

BLACK WOMAN

My old missus used to give me two shifts ever' year. I ain't got none since, an' you hav'n, an' nobody I talked to have, why-

ELIZABETH

It's gonna be alright.

BLACK WOMAN

How can you laugh?

ELIZABETH

I laugh because-

BLACK WOMAN

No master I ev'have been so cruel as t'see us freeze! Starve! See us be dirty, sick-

ELIZABETH

There is no master, now. Not for you. Not for anyone here, look.

BLACK WOMAN

But Mr. and Mrs. Gov'ment-

ELIZABETH

-Are no masters to you. They will never give you a shift.

BLACK WOMAN

I never should've left.



ELIZABETH

You can always make one?

BLACK WOMAN

How? My hands are all bad.

The WOMAN holds up trembling hands.

BLACK WOMAN

I can't hold a needle straight t'save my life, I tried!

ELIZABETH

I'll see what I can do.

BLACK WOMAN

You'll talk to Mr. and Mrs. Gov'ment?

ELIZABETH

No...That's what the Relief Society is for. We have clothes and food-

BLACK WOMAN

I can't pay, ma'am, you know that. And there's not much work I can do now.

ELIZABETH

You don't have to do anything.

BLACK WOMAN

How can that be?

ELIZABETH

Kind people donated these things for you. For all of us.

BLACK WOMAN

I don't have t'pay?

ELIZABETH

No, ma'am.

BLACK WOMAN

How do I-

ELIZABETH

In that building yonder, you'll meet a nice man named Reverend Christopher. Tell him what you need and he'll help you.

BLACK WOMAN

Thank you.

ELIZABETH

You're welcome.

The WOMAN takes ELIZABETH's hands and  
kisses them.

BLACK WOMAN

May the Lord bless you.

ELIZABETH

Enjoy your rest. You've served long enough.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) Along with these were people who built. Schools with good teachers, many of whom were my friends, white and colored- They popped up in black districts of the city, where whole brigades of bright-eyed dusky children burst through their doors. Such schools were of great interest to the President, and others. Insomuch as I was accustomed to his prying for my opinion.

Enter ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM

Are you leaving?

ELIZABETH

Is there something you need?

ABRAHAM

My wife's entertaining.

ELIZABETH

Tiring?

ABRAHAM

Very. Say, I have thoughts-

ELIZABETH

I should hope the president has thoughts.

ABRAHAM

-You may find compelling. At least that suit your interest.

ELIZABETH

As you like.

They sit together.

ABRAHAM

I spend much time in the War Room, you know, discussing the intricacies of this nasty business, and it's occurred to me- where is Mr. Keckly?

ELIZABETH

This occurred to you in the War Room?

ABRAHAM

No! I mean to say, if I'm keeping you from your husband-

ELIZABETH

Don't have one. I did, but he was a scoundrel.

ABRAHAM

I'm sorry for your loss.

ELIZABETH

I left him. Readily.

ELIZABETH begins to leave.

ABRAHAM

I didn't know that.

ELIZABETH

You didn't ask.

ABRAHAM

Touché, madam. You must be very brave.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

ABRAHAM

You work with Mary all day.

ELIZABETH

And you work with her all night.

ABRAHAM goes red.

ABRAHAM

I mean- well-

ELIZABETH

My humor precedes my thought, I apologize.

ABRAHAM

No, no, you're witty. I like that.

ELIZABETH

Glad to be of service.

They look at one another.

ELIZABETH

There was something you wanted to ask me, Mr. Lincoln?

ABRAHAM

—Abraham. Unless that makes you uncomfortable.

ELIZABETH

Oh, no, sir. Slip of the tongue.

ABRAHAM

You can call me whatever you like—or is most appropriate, considering.

ELIZABETH

Considering...

ABRAHAM

Nevermind. I shouldn't keep you, I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH

You're not keeping me, Abraham. What is it?

ABRAHAM

Do you think...white men are often bad?

ELIZABETH

I've had my fair share of bad apples.

ABRAHAM

Do you think...we...have a predisposition to be cruel?

ELIZABETH

The Lord never made anyone bad on purpose. Or by accident.

ABRAHAM

...Do you ever miss home?

ABRAHAM grimaces.

ELIZABETH

I miss my mother. I used to write her letters, but...she never replied.

ABRAHAM

Maybe they're being intercepted?

ELIZABETH

No, Mistress Garland was good that way. She didn't mind. She let me do all kinds of things, provided I got my work done. One summer, I was a bridesmaid in six weddings.

ABRAHAM

You must be fun at parties. Or a very good friend.

ELIZABETH

(jokingly) Not both.

ABRAHAM

(jokingly) Never both.

ELIZABETH

Do you miss your mother?

ABRAHAM

My sister was mother to me, after our own passed away. I was a child.

ELIZABETH

And your sister?

ABRAHAM

Didn't have a choice. She loved me, though. Loved us all.

ELIZABETH

Children make reluctant mothers.

ABRAHAM

I doubt my rambunctiousness helped.

ELIZABETH

Mischief makes us fonder.

ABRAHAM

I'm not very familiar with the intricacies of slavery.

ELIZABETH

It isn't very intricate.

ABRAHAM

Didn't even see one until I was grown.

ELIZABETH

Well, for one, slave children can't go to school.

ABRAHAM

Neither could I.

ELIZABETH

Can't keep their wages, even if they worked for someone outside the family.

ABRAHAM

My father kept mine until my twenties.

ELIZABETH

That's hardly the same.

ABRAHAM

You're right,. I was wrong to compare. It's no wonder you'd hate the Southerners.

ELIZABETH

How could I hate children I raised? Men and women who loved me and my son? Loved us enough to free us? The South isn't wrong. It's the law.

ABRAHAM

I didn't expect that.

ELIZABETH

I beg your pardon?

ABRAHAM

You keep surprising me. –That's what I think, too. That it's the law, encouraging behavior beneath our humanity.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

ABRAHAM

We can change it.

ELIZABETH

Asking me all these questions won't make you understand what it's like.

ABRAHAM

Being black?

ELIZABETH

In a word.

ABRAHAM

I saw, once, a slave family sold and seperated. The mother weeping as her child was taken, yet saying nothing. ...I didn't do anything about it.

ELIZABETH

There's nothing you could've done.

ABRAHAM

I was a coward.

ELIZABETH

You were one in, what, a hundred? Was this a marketplace? They would've jailed you before you even got close.

ABRAHAM

I could've bought them.

ELIZABETH

An entire family?

ABRAHAM

They'll never see each other again.

ELIZABETH

I can't praise you for your agony.

ABRAHAM

I didn't mean-

ELIZABETH

I know.

ABRAHAM

Mary would have given a blow to the face had I offended her the way I have you.

ELIZABETH



Maybe she shouldn't do that.

ABRAHAM

—Elizabeth, I—

ABRAHAM

I have to free the slaves.

ELIZABETH

You'd do that?

ABRAHAM

Yes.

ELIZABETH

I'd give you a hundred thanks, a thousand. I'd kiss you a hundred thousand times.

ABRAHAM

Elizabeth...

ELIZABETH

Your hands, of course. If you freed them, I might.

ABRAHAM

It's already decided...for the war.

ELIZABETH

What could my people have to do with—

ABRAHAM

We have no men left. Our generals are squabbling without supplies, without bodies— with too many bodies, rather.

ELIZABETH

You mean to make us fight?

ABRAHAM

I mean to ask.

ELIZABETH

If you free us-

ABRAHAM

We'll win the war.

ELIZABETH

We fought in the revolution, and after, you put us in shackles.

ABRAHAM

It won't be as it was.

ELIZABETH

So said the revolutionaries.

ABRAHAM

It won't be as it was!

ELIZABETH leaves him.

ABRAHAM grabs ELIZABETH's hand. She stops  
for a breath, and he lets go. Again, Abraham  
Lincoln at the feet of a black woman.

ABRAHAM

Elizabeth, please.

*Never Be the Same*

ELIZABETH

WE'LL NEVER BE THE SAME  
WE'RE TOO DIFFERENT  
PEOPLE  
WE'LL NEVER BE THE SAME  
WE'RE TOO DIFFERENT  
IT'S LEGAL  
BUT SOMEHOW I SEE  
IN YOUR EYES  
THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT  
COMING FROM INSIDE  
SOMEHOW I SEE

AND I'LL NEVER BE

ABRAHAM

WE'LL NEVER BE THE SAME  
WE'LL NEVER BE, WE'LL NEVER BE  
BUT YOU SHOWED ME  
YOU SHOWED ME  
A PART OF YOU, A PART OF YOU  
A PART OF YOU I'D NEVER SEEN  
AND I'LL NEVER BE THE SAME

ELIZABETH

I HEAR THE RIVER CALLING  
I HEAR THE SOUNDS OF HOME  
MY SON IS RUNNING TO ME  
CALLING TO ME  
MAMA, DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE  
IF I COULD DO IT ALL TOMORROW  
LIKE TO THINK I'D CHANGE THE SORROW  
BUT I KNOW DEEP DOWN, DEEP DOWN  
THAT NEVER, NO, NEVER  
NO, NEVER  
IT'LL NEVER BE THE SAME

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

WE'RE TOO DIFFERENT  
PEOPLE  
WE'LL NEVER BE THE SAME  
WE'RE TOO DIFFERENT  
IT'S LEGAL  
BUT SOMEHOW I SEE  
IN YOUR EYES  
THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT  
COMING FROM INSIDE  
SOMEHOW I SEE  
AND I'LL NEVER BE

ABRAHAM

I HEAR THE RIVER CALLING  
I HEAR THE SOUNDS OF HOME

MY SON IS RUNNING TO ME  
CALLING TO ME  
PAPA, DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE  
IF I COULD DO IT ALL TOMORROW  
LIKE TO THINK I'D CHANGE THE SORROW  
BUT I KNOW DEEP DOWN, DEEP DOWN  
THAT NEVER, NO, NEVER  
NO, NEVER  
IT'LL NEVER BE THE SAME

ABRAHAM/ELIZABETH

WE'RE TOO DIFFERENT  
PEOPLE  
WE'LL NEVER BE THE SAME  
WE'RE TOO DIFFERENT  
IT'S LEGAL  
BUT SOMEHOW I SEE  
IN YOUR EYES  
THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT  
COMING FROM INSIDE  
SOMEHOW I SEE  
AND I'LL NEVER BE

Enter MARY.

MARY

What are you up to?

ABRAHAM and ELIZABETH leap apart.

ABRAHAM

Nothing.

ELIZABETH

Talking.

MARY

Funny, I thought you were tired.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

MARY in her lounge, at her vanity, peacocking.

ELIZABETH stands outside the scene.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) Y'all get y'all's snacks? Your water, your sodapop, y'all good? I can keep talking then, nobody's going to be interrupting me, yes? Let's just watch for a minute. You see her? A gift from the heavens, bestowed by the Lord himself, like a plague or something.

*At Least I'm Me*

MARY

I'M NOT MODEST  
I'M NOT HUMBLE  
ALL THESE MEN  
THINK THEY CAN  
PLAY ME LIKE A PIPE  
BUT BABY, I AM  
TROUBLE

DON'T PRETEND TO BE  
ANYTHING I'M NOT  
THINK YOU FORGOT  
WITH WHOM  
YOU'RE DEALING  
SORRY BUT NOT  
SORRY FOR ALL YOUR  
LITTLE THOUGHTS AND  
PRECIOUS LITTLE  
FEELINGS

I'M A LOT  
BUT AT LEAST I'M  
ME

ELIZABETH

Duty calls.

ELIZABETH steps into the scene.

MARY

Ugh, there you are. Come here!

ELIZABETH helps MARY undress.

MARY

MY HUSBAND  
OVERFLOWS WITH TEARS  
AND SORROW  
WHEN TOMORROW COMES  
ALL THE WORK IS DONE  
IT'S YOURS TRULY  
YOU SHOULD FOLLOW

HE'S GOT THESE DREAMS  
YEAH, FALL FOR THAT  
"HE PROMISED"  
HONEY, PLEASE  
DO YOU REALLY THINK  
ANY MAN IS  
COMPLETELY HONEST?

DON'T PRETEND TO BE  
ANYTHING I'M NOT  
THINK YOU FORGOT  
WITH WHOM  
YOU'RE DEALING  
SORRY BUT NOT  
SORRY FOR ALL YOUR  
LITTLE THOUGHTS AND  
PRECIOUS LITTLE  
FEELINGS

I'M A WOMAN  
I'M AN UNDERDOG  
I'M TOP PLAYER  
IN THE GAME  
THEY ALL  
FLIRT WITH ME  
TALK DIRT TO ME

BABY, THEY ALL KNOW  
MY NAME

I'M A LOT  
I'M NOT MODEST  
BUT I'M HOTTEST  
I'M A LOT  
I FORGET MYSELF SOMETIMES  
YEAH, I'M A LOT  
BUT AT LEAST I'M  
ME

ELIZABETH

THAT MAY BE  
BUT WHEN YOU  
TALK ABOUT  
DREAMS  
YOU DON'T SEE  
THE BEAUTY IN THEIR  
WINGS

MARY

I MAKE MINE HAPPEN  
I DON'T NEED  
YOUR MAKE BELIEVE

ELIZABETH

HIS EYES  
SEE A WORLD OF  
COMPROMISE  
WHERE MY  
COLOR DOESN'T HINDER  
AND I THRIVE THROUGHOUT  
THE WINTER  
OF MY PROBATION  
HE CAN SEE A NATION  
WHERE WE  
ARE FREE  
FREE LIKE WE'RE MEANT TO BE!  
FREE TO LOVE AND FREE TO CHOOSE

FREE WHERE WE CAN'T LOSE  
WE CAN'T LOSE  
FREE TO CHOOSE

MARY

I'M A LOT  
BUT I DON'T  
MAKE UP STORIES  
I'M A LOT  
I FORGET YOU'RE SO NAIVE  
YEAH, I'M A LOT  
BUT AT LEAST I'M  
ME

ELIZABETH

Ma'am?

MARY

That man is such a nightmare.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Lincoln?

MARY

The dinner, Mr. Lincoln, whatever. I have an object in view. There is so much gossip surrounding me, you would not believe! And because of these ravenous hounds that plague us at the White House, trying to bite at my husband-

ELIZABETH

Because of the gossip...

MARY

I can't allow them near him!

ELIZABETH

Is any of it true?

MARY

He is too good. It would be unchristian of me to allow such, such evil to worm its way into his head.



ELIZABETH

He's a grown man.

MARY

An impressionable one.

ELIZABETH

He can think for himself.

MARY

He'll think himself into his grave! And what then? If he isn't president, then- Then...!

ELIZABETH

Then, what?

MARY

What will happen to me? ... We have to win.

ELIZABETH

You will.

MARY

You don't know that.

ELIZABETH

If he's the wrong choice, the North'll be the last to admit it. The South made his election a pretext for rebellion, so replacing him with someone else would look like a surrender.

MARY

He has no idea what goes on in these campaigns.

ELIZABETH

Unlikely.

MARY

He thinks he can just go back to being a lawyer and everything will work itself out.

ELIZABETH

He's more economical than you give him credit.

MARY

There's more at stake than his simple, silly dreams.

ELIZABETH

Seeking peace in the world isn't-

MARY

His "generous allowance" can't supply all my wants. The people scrutinize everything I wear to the smallest detail; a favor to you, I might add. My patronage has made you rich, like so many others.

ELIZABETH

Not so.

MARY

Tut tut, don't be embarrassed. I've paid you well. The disgusting Republicans shouldn't be the only ones reaping reward from our successes.

ELIZABETH

You're not- prostrating yourself without Mr. Lincoln's knowledge!

MARY

These men owe me. They benefit from his contentment.

ELIZABETH

He's anything but content.

MARY

How would you know?

ELIZABETH

It's in his eyes.

MARY

He doesn't even suspect what I'm up to, yet he calls me paranoid. If he knew the truth of my debt, he'd go mad. ...confess to the public and ruin us all. Save for you. You'd move on to new clientele, hot on the heels with, "her fancy clothes couldn't save her, that cow Mary Todd!"

ELIZABETH

I'd never.

MARY

All my friends would.

ELIZABETH

Mrs. Edwards would do that?

MARY

She'd laugh in the face of my misfortune, with all of Washington.

ELIZABETH

You're mistaken.

MARY

Oh, Lizzy.

ELIZABETH

I don't like seeing you so troubled.

MARY

I'm hardly troubled. Perturbed. Agitated, maybe.

ELIZABETH

Annoyed?

MARY

Yes!

ELIZABETH

The gossip comes from all these men you talk with.

MARY

For political purposes. Mr. Lincoln's too innocent to work out dealings with the likes of them.

ELIZABETH

If you'd socialize with them less in public-

MARY

And entertain them in private? I think not. We all chose our lots in life, Lizzy, at one point or another.

ELIZABETH

I was enslaved for thirty years.

MARY

And now you're here, aren't you? A free woman, with a thriving business and friends with opportunity. Congratulations!

ELIZABETH

Abraham means to free the slaves.

MARY

Mr. Lincoln will do what he will. I give you work enough you shouldn't have time to worry about what my husband does.

ELIZABETH

I don't.

MARY

Too much work is a blessing and a curse! How about we put a hold on your future projects, excluding the dress I mean to wear at the next levee, and go on a trip?

ELIZABETH

I can't afford a trip right now.

MARY

Pish posh, darling, you will go with us.

ELIZABETH

Where?

MARY

Down the Mississippi. We'll soon capture the Confederate capitol, and when we do, my husband will go down with the War Department to collect information and give a speech to the remaining troops.

ELIZABETH

It'll all be over.

MARY

If we free the slaves.

ELIZABETH

He's already discussed it with you?

MARY

I'm his wife.

ELIZABETH

Richmond will fall?

MARY

This week, next week. You will come with us.

ELIZABETH

Why?

MARY

Because I've asked you to.

ELIZABETH

...I'm grateful for the invitation.

MARY

As you should be. Goodnight now.

ELIZABETH

Goodnight.

MARY

I'll see you tomorrow. Oh, and Lizzy?

ELIZABETH

Yes?

MARY

I'll try on my dress for the levee tomorrow, if you please.

ELIZABETH

I don't know if it'll be ready tomorrow.

MARY

Bring it anyway. I'm sure there's a ruffle or two I'd like to adjust, it's such fun.

MARY exits.

As ELIZABETH speaks, the scene transitions to a  
steamboat slowly passing greenery.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) And such fun it was, for me to work candle to candle in the witching hours to finish it in time. Turns out I was none too soon, for as Mrs. Lincoln predicted, Richmond did fall. It wasn't the end of the war by any means, not yet, but it was the beginning of something else. Mrs. Lincoln, Mr. Lincoln, and I on a steamboat overlooking the lushest, most prosperous land of the whole country. It was a lovely, lovely getaway.

ELIZABETH remembers herself.

ELIZABETH

To be clear, I did not have a rendezvous with the President. It was a political engagement. I wasn't too involved in that part, though, it was a sort of...family trip, with some business on the way. I'm not sure what you're all thinking, but I'm offended.

ELIZABETH settles into the scene, watching the  
river.

ELIZABETH

The route to the fallen Confederate capitol passed by my hometown, so if nothing else, I-

The sun begins to set over a destroyed, desolate St.  
Louis. *The Fall of St. Louis* plays. ELIZABETH,  
shocked, is stricken with grief. Enter MARY.

MARY

Good God, Lizzy, I- what? You shouldn't need sea-legs on a river.

ELIZABETH

There's nothing left.

MARY

If you must be sick, do it quickly. My husband will be joining us next port and it's imperative we make a good impression. The decorations, the lights- Are you listening?

ELIZABETH

Sorry.

MARY

The party's in only a few hours!

ELIZABETH

You don't mean to dress now?

MARY

Mr. Lincoln, Senator Sumner, distinguished gentleman will be seeing me very soon, and-

Enter CAPTAIN, a white man.

CAPTAIN

Madam President?

MARY

Yes?

CAPTAIN

The River Queen'll be making port shortly.

MARY

Wonderful.

CAPTAIN tips his hat and exits.

MARY

Now, please.

MARY and ELIZABETH exit. St. Louis slides out of view as the last refrain ends.

Enter MARY and ELIZABETH, well-dressed. They  
lurch to the side as the boat stops, the fog horn  
bellowing.

CAPTAIN (offstage)

Mr. President!

MARY hurriedly ushers out a BAND of black performers: a trumpeter, a snare drum, a violin, a cello. She hastily conducts as the musicians fumble with their instruments. The BAND plays *The River Queen*. MARY turns just as ABRAHAM enters, followed by an entourage of three white gentlemen and their wives. ABRAHAM greets MARY with a kiss on the cheek. As MARY warmly welcomes the gentlemen aboard, ABRAHAM takes both of ELIZABETH's hands in his; they look at one another. Night falls. ABRAHAM releases ELIZABETH.

ABRAHAM

What wonders they have in the South.

MARY

Nothing we don't have at home.

ABRAHAM

The stars, mother.

ABRAHAM winks at ELIZABETH.

ABRAHAM

There are no such stars in Washington.

MARY

No such smells, either.

ABRAHAM

Did you hear that?

MARY



A lot of prattling on about nothing.

ABRAHAM

Stop the music!

The BAND stops abruptly. A frog call is heard over  
the groaning of the engine.

ABRAHAM

What is that?

ELIZABETH

Just a little bullfrog.

ABRAHAM

Stop the boat!

MARY

What has gotten into you?

ABRAHAM

Stop!

MALE ENSEMBLE (offstage)

Stop!

Stop the engine!

Anchor!

The engine sputters and slows to quiet, the boat  
lurching to a stop. A huge splash; everyone all but  
topples over. Enter CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN

What's wrong?

ABRAHAM

Look! Do you see it?

Everyone peers over the edge of the boat to where  
ABRAHAM points in earnest. Varying degrees of  
interest. The sounds of a Southern summer night.

ABRAHAM

Just there, look. Tell me you see it.

A frog call.

MARY

A frog!

ABRAHAM

Shh! Madam Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

...I believe the president's spotted a terrapin.

MARY

A what?

ELIZABETH

A turtle. There, on that log by the bank.

ABRAHAM

Fancy I could catch it?

MARY

You will not!

ABRAHAM

Ah, but you agree I could?

MARY

Abraham Lincoln, your turtle-catching days are long behind you. I don't know who you think you are-

ABRAHAM

The president of the United States?

MARY

You're not some low-life, country ruffian!

ABRAHAM

I hate to correct you, mother, but the word you're looking for is bumpkin.

MARY

Excuse me?

ABRAHAM

Country bumpkin, it's a very common expression.

MARY

Common. Start the music. Music, I say!

The BAND scurries to play *The River Queen*.

MARY

Captain, continue. We apologize for the interruption.

CAPTAIN tips his hat and exits. Slowly, the engine  
groans and the boat begins again down the river.  
ABRAHAM and ELIZABETH watch the turtle as  
they sail away. MARY ushers the gentlemen and  
their wives to dance.

ELIZABETH

For the record, I'd've loved to see you try.

ABRAHAM

You doubt me?

ELIZABETH

Splashing around in those big old shoes?

ABRAHAM

A sight for sore eyes. Better we didn't disturb him, poor fellow. ... I've missed the river.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

ABRAHAM

I once ran a ferry on the Ohio.

ELIZABETH

You, a ferryman?

ABRAHAM

President Ferryman to you! When the crowd had cleared, I would sit on my boat and watch the river go by.

ELIZABETH

Sounds nice.

ABRAHAM

It was.

ELIZABETH

And quiet.

ABRAHAM

Heavens, I'll never have that again. Mary's...

ELIZABETH

Resistant?

ABRAHAM

Incapable. It's always noise, noise, noise, and she hardly likes anything.

ELIZABETH

She likes you?

ABRAHAM

Sometimes.

MARY pulls on ABRAHAM's arm.

ABRAHAM

Dance?

ELIZABETH

But there are so many people-

MARY and ABRAHAM are already gone.

ELIZABETH watches as they dance, ashamed that  
she thought, even for a moment, that ABRAHAM  
was asking her to the dancefloor. Meanwhile,  
MARY's movements are graceful and practiced,  
ABRAHAM's clumsy.  
*Nightmare*

ELIZABETH

BARELY, I SEE IT  
FAINTLY, I DREAM  
I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN  
THAT DANCE DIDN'T SEEM  
A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE

Enter JAMES, who spins ELIZABETH into a  
dance, mirroring ABRAHAM and MARY.

ELIZABETH

HIS ARMS AROUND ME  
TIGHT LIKE A VICE  
HIS VOICE SO TENDER  
YET NOT VERY NICE  
A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE

LOOK HOW HE HOLDS HER  
LOOK AT HIS EYES  
LOOK HOW SHE HOLDS HIM  
TIGHT LIKE A VICE  
A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE

HER VOICE ISN'T TENDER  
HER WORDS COLD AS ICE  
HOW CAN YOU BE CRUEL  
TO SOMEONE SO KIND

ELIZABETH ends up in ABRAHAM's arms.

A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE

ELIZABETH

A NIGHTMARE

ABRAHAM

BARELY, I SEE IT  
FAINTLY, I DREAM  
I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN  
THAT DANCE DIDN'T SEEM  
WHEN THAT DANCE SEEMED

ELIZABETH

JAMES creeps upon the dance.

WHEN THIS DANCE  
WHEN THIS DANCE

ELIZABETH

JAMES steals ELIZABETH away.

A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE

MY VOICE CAN'T BE TENDER  
I'VE BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH  
I CANNOT HOLD HIM  
I'LL BREAK AT HIS TOUCH

ELIZABETH runs into ABRAHAM, off the dance  
floor.

A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE  
A NIGHTMARE

ELIZABETH

A NIGHTMARE

ABRAHAM

What's wrong? Are you ill?

ELIZABETH vomits overboard.  
The boat scene disappears.

ELIZABETH

(To the audience) A golden memory. We headed up the river to Washington soon after, and-  
...the inauguration. Abraham won the election.

ELIZABETH braces herself, still recovering from  
feeling ill at the memory. Enter ABRAHAM;  
ELIZABETH straightens immediately, but relaxes  
somewhat when she sees who it is.

ABRAHAM

How do I look?

ELIZABETH

Fine.

ABRAHAM

My hair's a bit stick-up-ish.

ELIZABETH

Not bad.

They both tap at his hair. ABRAHAM gives up, and  
ELIZABETH can't quite reach..

ABRAHAM

Here.

ABRAHAM sits in a chair.

ABRAHAM

Do you mind?

ELIZABETH

No! Not at all. Do you have a-

ABRAHAM fishes a comb from his jacket.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

ELIZABETH combs his hair in silence.

ELIZABETH

...You've got a very stubborn cow-lick, Mr. President.

ABRAHAM

I don't know if I can do it.

ELIZABETH

Do what?

ABRAHAM

Be president again.

ELIZABETH

Little late for that.

ABRAHAM

They want this- lion for the Republic, Elizabeth, I can't do it anymore.

ELIZABETH

If you're as weak as you pretend, I'm surprised lesser men can walk.

ABRAHAM

They've heralded me.

ELIZABETH

The Moses of our people.

ABRAHAM

Or Pharoah.



ELIZABETH

No, sir, see...Pharaohs are bald.

ABRAHAM

I've never sought to be a great man. Only a good one.

ELIZABETH

And it's led you here.

ABRAHAM

I look at my goats in the mornings. They skip and play like children, grateful for everything. They feed on my bounty, and jump with joy over the bushes and things in the garden.

ELIZABETH

As goats are wont to do.

ABRAHAM

Yes, but they're far above the real bounty-jumpers. I'd rather wear his horns and hairy coat than demean myself to the level of the man who plunders the national treasury in the name of patriotism.

ELIZABETH

Abraham.

ABRAHAM

The man who enlists in the army and deserts as soon as he gets a paycheck is bad enough- some even do so repeatedly, but the men who manipulate the grand machine for their own-

ELIZABETH

You're not those men.

ABRAHAM

Some would beg to differ.

ELIZABETH

And others would call you Moses, Deliverer. I don't know about you, but I wouldn't be interested in a man who fancied himself a Moses.

ABRAHAM scoffs.

ABRAHAM

Interested.

ELIZABETH pulls a little roughly with the comb.

ABRAHAM jumps, wincing.

ABRAHAM

Hey!

ELIZABETH smiles.

ELIZABETH

Oops.

ABRAHAM chuckles incredulously.

*Never Be the Same (Reprise)*

ELIZABETH

YOU KNOW I SEE  
IN YOUR EYES  
THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT  
COMING FROM INSIDE  
YOU KNOW I SEE  
AND I'LL NEVER BE

You're a good man, Abraham. And you make a fine president.

MARY (offstage)

Where is he?!

ELIZABETH

Go swear that oath and prove it. Oh, and-

ABRAHAM

Anything.

ELIZABETH

The glove you'll wear at the inauguration ball, when you shake everyone's hand? I'd like it.

ABRAHAM

You want my dirty glove?

ELIZABETH

Hundreds of good Americans wishing you well...

ABRAHAM

Do you wish me well, Madam Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Of course.

ABRAHAM

Say so.

ELIZABETH

I wish you well, Abraham Lincoln.

ABRAHAM

And my dirty glove.

ELIZABETH

And your dirty glove.

ABRAHAM

I never got the impression you were one for gifts.

ELIZABETH

Anything you send me, I'll be sending it right back.

ABRAHAM

A remembrance, then.

ELIZABETH

A substitute.

ABRAHAM

For what?

ELIZABETH

They won't allow me backstage.

ABRAHAM

That's absurd.

ELIZABETH

It's the inauguration of the most hated- and loved -President of the United States.

ABRAHAM

I'll be sure of it.

ELIZABETH

And what would Mary say to that?

MARY (offstage)

Abraham Lincoln!

ABRAHAM

I don't care.

ELIZABETH

I do.

ABRAHAM

Mary adores you, she'd love it.

ELIZABETH

That isn't the point.

ABRAHAM

You're...afraid to be seen with me.

ELIZABETH

People'd get the wrong-.

ABRAHAM

What, that you mean something to me?

ELIZABETH

It's a bad idea!

ABRAHAM

Am I not allowed a poor choice? After all I've done?

ELIZABETH

Are you saying I owe you something?

ABRAHAM

No! Of all the decisions, can I not once choose for myself?

ELIZABETH

Think of your title, the president-

Enter MARY.

ABRAHAM

Damn your stubbornness!

MARY

What are you doing?

ELIZABETH

He had a-

MARY

We have to go!

MARY starts fussing over ABRAHAM's hair as she  
pushes him toward the door.

ELIZABETH

...Cowlick.

ABRAHAM

I'm fine.

ABRAHAM brushes her hands away. He catches  
them and glares at MARY.

ABRAHAM

I look fine.

MARY

You look like a-

ABRAHAM

A low-born, good for nothing cowhand, I know...I know.

ABRAHAM glances back at ELIZABETH with a wounded expression. He sighs and leaves. MARY follows.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) ...And then I was alone again. Mary did give me the glove, by the way, on his behalf, but... But the night the war ended, I realized... I realized after that night that I'd never see him again. A friend told me first, through the din of the fireworks, that the President was shot. When I heard the words I felt as if the blood had been frozen in my veins, and that my lungs must collapse for want of air. The streets were alive with wondering, awe-stricken people. Rumors flew thick and fast, and the wildest reports came with every new arrival. The words were repeated with blanched cheeks and quivering lips, "Moses is shot!" The house would not hold me. Not a mortal hand on God's Earth could keep me from those doors.

*The Assassination*

ELIZABETH

THERE WERE BANNERS ON THE WALLS  
THERE WERE FLAGS UP IN THE HALLS  
THERE WERE PEOPLE MARCHING  
IN THE STREET  
THERE WAS MUSIC FROM THE WINDOWS  
AND THE ROOFTOPS AND THE SHINGLES  
THERE WERE PEOPLE CRYING,  
"IT CAN'T BE."

THERE WAS CHEERING  
THERE WAS WAILING  
IT WAS SUCH A JOYOUS DAY  
FOR THE UNION HAD JUST WON THE WAR  
BUT I FELL TO MY KNEES  
AND SAID, "NO, GOD, PLEASE,"  
'CAUSE THE PRESIDENT  
MR. PRESIDENT

ENSEMBLE

MR. PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH

Has been shot.

A gunshot.

ELIZABETH

AND I TRIED TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE CROWD  
BLOCKING THE WHITE HOUSE FROM VIEW  
BUT THE GRIEF WAS JUST TOO LOUD  
I TOLD THEM, "BUT I KNOW HIM,"  
BUT THEY SHOWED ME TO THE DOOR AND  
IN MY BED  
I DIDN'T SLEEP  
I ONLY CRIED  
COULD ONLY WEEP  
IN MY BED  
I PRAYED TO GOD  
TO SAVE HIM FROM THE BULLET IN HIS HEART

ENSEMBLE

THERE WERE BANNERS ON THE WALLS  
THERE WERE FLAGS UP IN THE HALLS  
THERE WERE PEOPLE MARCHING  
IN THE STREET  
THERE WAS MUSIC FROM THE WINDOWS  
AND THE ROOFTOPS AND THE SHINGLES  
THERE WERE PEOPLE CRYING,  
"IT CAN'T BE."

ELIZABETH

THERE WAS CHEERING  
THERE WAS WAILING  
IT WAS SUCH A JOYOUS DAY  
FOR THE UNION HAD JUST WON THE WAR

BUT WHAT A LOSS

ELIZABETH

WHAT A LOSS

ENSEMBLE

AT WHAT COST

ELIZABETH

AT WHAT COST

ENSEMBLE

MR. PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH

MR. PRESIDENT

...Has been shot.

The WHITE ENSEMBLE enters, the BLACK ENSEMBLE makes room, careful not to touch or cross lines. They all are wary of one another. All look skyward.

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) We watched the blood sun rise red over the horizon and we knew. I knew. We were witnesses to the ascension of the finest man born on God's Earth, and we screamed.

BLACK ENSEMBLE cries out, staggeredly falling to the earth. ELIZABETH shakily begins to sing.

*The Freedmen (Reprise)*

THE DAYS ARE UNKIND  
TO THE NEGRO  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
BUT WHAT IS IT FOR?  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
BUT MOSES IS FALLEN  
THE FREEDMEN ARE FREE  
FOR A MAN WE ADORED

OH, WHERE IS MY SAVIOR?



OH, WHERE IS MY PEACE?  
OH, WHERE IS MY SOLACE?  
OH, WHERE'S MY RELEASE?  
OH, WHERE IS THE DE-CEN-CY  
OH, WHERE IN THE WORLD?

ELIZABETH

(to the audience) The universe was swathed in funeral black. The War was over, but what now? Abraham Lincoln's blood was a salve for the loss of the Confederacy. Their rage was sated. Only bitterness remained, on both sides.

The WHITE ENSEMBLE and BLACK  
ENSEMBLE look uneasily at one another,  
distrusting. They back offstage in opposite  
directions.

ELIZABETH

But it wasn't over. Not for me.

ELIZABETH turns to see a white sheet hiding a  
BODY.

ELIZABETH

A lion for the Republic.

She chokes up.

ELIZABETH

A Moses. ...A Samson.

Slowly, she pulls back the shroud. ABRAHAM,  
cold and dead.

ELIZABETH

—Abraham—

ELIZABETH cannot bear to look, but cannot look  
away. She won't allow herself. She will look.

ELIZABETH

Abraham.

She reaches for his hand, flinching at its coldness.  
She holds it anyway. She touches his hair, fixes it  
just so. She touches it more. She runs her fingers  
through it, cradling his face, looking into his closed  
eyes.

ELIZABETH

(to God) How many, Lord? How many have to die before I learn?

She puts her forehead to his as she heaves quiet  
sobs.

ELIZABETH

You have leveled me- knocked down my tower, God. What use is a name when my heart is shot  
and my soul is shot and my body can't carry anymore pain? What is it for? (to ABRAHAM) ...If  
there's any part of you listening, I- Abraham, I- –Damn me to Hell if I say it outloud!

ELIZABETH wails. When we sobs lessen to  
weeping, enter MARY.

MARY

You...Where have you been?

ELIZABETH covers the body and stands, wiping  
her face quickly.

ELIZABETH

Ma'am?

MARY throws her arms around ELIZABETH.

MARY

I sent for you so many times...

ELIZABETH

The White House was on lockdown, they wouldn't-

MARY

Why didn't you tell them I needed you? No one understands how I suffer! No one cares, oh, God-- no one cares... I'll be buried with him.

ELIZABETH

Of course-

MARY

Today!

ELIZABETH

Don't be foolish.

MARY

I have no one... You love me, don't you? Don't you?

ELIZABETH

Let's get you in bed.

MARY

Answer me!

ELIZABETH

He loved you so much.

MARY

That's not what I asked.

ELIZABETH

...I'll love you.

MARY

I have your word?

ELIZABETH

Yes, ma'am.

MARY

Good...I have something for you.

ELIZABETH

You don't have to give me anything.

MARY

He'd want you to have it.

MARY fetches a coat spattered in blood.

MARY

Take it. Take it!

ELIZABETH takes the bloodied coat with trembling hands. She holds it to her chest.

MARY

You and Abraham were close, so we have to stick together now. And if you love me, you'll...you'll come when I call you, no matter what.

ELIZABETH

No matter what.

MARY's bedroom. ELIZABETH helps MARY to lay down.

MARY

You gave me your word. You promised.

ELIZABETH lays in bed with MARY, still holding the coat. The redness of the blood spatter glares at the audience.

MARY

If you leave me-

ELIZABETH

I won't.

MARY

I'll kill myself. And if you turn against me, I'll...I'll ruin you. You'll be nothing without me, do you understand? You'll love me always.

ELIZABETH

I will.

MARY tries to sleep as ELIZABETH stares,  
clutching the coat tightly. Her voice is hollow.

ELIZABETH

(To the audience) The adoring crowds that fawned at his casket scorned his widow, spat upon her when she passed and laughed over tabloids exploiting her pain.

ELIZABETH brushes MARY's hair out of her face.

ELIZABETH

(To the audience) I did everything I could. I neglected my business, fundraised, I used every connection I had for her. No matter what I did, it wasn't enough. Made things worse, she said. The colored people would do anything for Moses' widow.

MARY

(from bed) I won't take money from negroes.

ELIZABETH

(To the audience) She exhausted all my resources. My clientele was practically in dregs, not from lack of demand. I saw J. D. Green's book, and Mattie Jackson's, and twenty or so others', I thought, what if I wrote a book? I could give her the money. I could work with a publisher who understood...make sure my story came out right. She ruined me. I ruined myself, I... It's getting late, folks.

ELIZABETH rises to put on a proper coat and hat, a  
regal lady of proper, respectable station.

ELIZABETH

...It's no good rewriting old books so young people like them better. No, I...I'd rather move forward. Into a new day.

Enter ENSEMBLE.

ELIZABETH

Oh, and one more thing.

ELIZABETH pulls a copy of her book out of a  
handbag and tosses it on the floor.

ELIZABETH

They spelled my name wrong on the cover.

ENSEMBLE

IN THIS DAY  
THERE'S A NEW DAWN A'BREAKIN'  
IN THIS DAY  
THERE'S A PLACE FOR US ALL  
IN THIS DAY  
THERE'S A NEW GENERATION  
IN THIS DAY  
IN THIS DAY  
IN THIS DAY  
WE HEAR THE CALL

ELIZABETH

FREEDOM IS HARD TO BE

ALL

WON

*Curtain Call Medley*

## V. Conclusion

Elizabeth Keckly was a successful business owner, a mother, a confidante, a friend, a social justice advocate, a slave, and a black woman. In her time and after, she has been disrespected and slighted in treatment and in name, a footnote in history despite her overwhelming example of Black Excellence and humanity. My musical seeks to undo some of that bias against her with another side of her coin. I seek to provide another option to these tired versions of her identity as a black person, a historical figure, a name in a book. I want the world to see her the way I want the world to see me: real, and tangible. Through my research and play at her character, I have found that lost person, or an idea of her, that treats her with empathy and respect. My hope is that this work of study and art can bring to pass change in the way Americans perceive black pain, and the way we impose harmful stereotypes on those who merely exist while being black, or worse, dare ask for sympathy. Elizabeth was a person who lived and died in the dirt, without even a grave to mark her. Yet, she memorialized herself in her own word, immortal in print. It is time we remember her.

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Appendix

*The War Room*

MARY

I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS  
BUT I KNOW WHERE HE WENT  
IF I MUST DECLARE IT  
I WOULD VENTURE TO GUESS

HE'S LIKELY IN THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS IN THE WAR ROOM  
IN THE WAR ROOM  
DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
HE'S LIKELY IN THE WAR ROOM  
BROODING IN THE WAR ROOM  
MOVING ALL HIS LITTLE PAWNS  
PLAYING HIS LITTLE GAME

Enter ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM

Mother, I'm-

MARY

GOING TO THE WAR ROOM  
I KNOW IT, TO THE WAR ROOM  
TO THE WAR ROOM  
THEY'LL DO JUST WHAT YOU SAY  
RATHER BE THERE IN THE WAR ROOM  
CAVORTING IN THE WAR ROOM  
IN THE WAR ROOM  
YOU GET TO HAVE YOUR WAY

ABRAHAM

DEAREST,  
I'M NO STRATITITION

MARY

That's not a word.

ABRAHAM

STRATEGIST, THEN.  
I DO MORE ASKING THAN I'D LIKE.  
I GO TO THE WAR ROOM  
TO DO MY DUTY TO THE NATION

MARY

AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR DUTY TO YOUR WIFE?

YOU'RE ALWAYS GOING TO THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS TO THE WAR ROOM  
TO THE WAR ROOM  
DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
HE'S LIKELY IN THE WAR ROOM  
BROODING IN THE WAR ROOM  
MOVING ALL HIS LITTLE PAWNS  
PLAYING HIS LITTLE GAME

ABRAHAM

THIS IS NO GAME.  
MEN ARE DYING  
THEY ARE DYING EVERY DAY.  
TOWNS ARE RAVAGED, CITIES BURNED.  
AND THE WOMEN AND THE CHILDREN IN THEM,  
ALL LOST TO THE SCOURGE.  
AND THE FREEDMEN,  
THE FORMERLY ENSLAVED,  
THEY STARVE AND WALLOW  
RIGHT BEFORE MY FACE!  
WHAT CAN I DO  
BUT INQUIRE FOR THEIR WELFARE  
IN THE WAR ROOM

MARY

IN THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS IN THE WAR ROOM  
IN THE WAR ROOM

DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
HE'S LIKELY IN THE WAR ROOM  
BROODING IN THE WAR ROOM  
MOVING ALL HIS LITTLE PAWNS  
PLAYING HIS LITTLE GAME

ABRAHAM

I'M GOING TO THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS TO THE WAR ROOM  
TO THE WAR ROOM  
DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
OF COURSE I'M IN THE WAR ROOM  
PLEADING IN THE WAR ROOM  
IF YOU COULD END THE SUFF'RING-

MARY

WAR IS THE ONLY WAY!

MARY

IN THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS IN THE WAR ROOM  
IN THE WAR ROOM  
DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
HE'S LIKELY IN THE WAR ROOM  
BROODING IN THE WAR ROOM  
MOVING ALL HIS LITTLE PAWNS  
PLAYING HIS LITTLE GAME

IN THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS IN THE WAR ROOM  
IN THE WAR ROOM  
DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
HE'S LIKELY IN THE WAR ROOM  
BROODING IN THE WAR ROOM  
MOVING ALL HIS LITTLE PAWNS  
PLAYING HIS LITTLE GAME

ABRAHAM

I'M GOING TO THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS TO THE WAR ROOM  
TO THE WAR ROOM  
DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
OF COURSE I'M IN THE WAR ROOM  
PLEADING IN THE WAR ROOM  
IF YOU COULD END THE SUFF'RING  
IF YOU KNEW WHAT'S AT STAKE

I'M GOING TO THE WAR ROOM  
ALWAYS TO THE WAR ROOM  
TO THE WAR ROOM  
DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY  
OF COURSE I'M IN THE WAR ROOM  
PLEADING IN THE WAR ROOM  
IF YOU COULD END THE SUFF'RING  
IF YOU KNEW WHAT'S AT STAKE

MARY

YOU'RE NOT A HERO!  
A NOBODY FROM NOWHERE  
AND WITHOUT ME YOU WOULD BE NOWHERE STILL

ABRAHAM

I'M NOT A HERO!  
ONLY A STEWARD FOR THE HEROES-

MARY

YOUR POETRY IS GOING TO GET YOU KILLED.  
Where are you going now?

ABRAHAM

To the War Room.

ABRAHAM exits.

## **Fleischner Interview**

WEBVTT

1

00:00:00.000 --> 00:00:01.740

This and while okay.

2

00:00:02.850 --> 00:00:04.710

Jennifer Fleischner: It should be recording. It is.

3

00:00:05.100 --> 00:00:05.609

Selah DeGering: It is.

4

00:00:06.720 --> 00:00:07.620

Jennifer Fleischner: A transcript.

5

00:00:08.460 --> 00:00:10.860

Selah DeGering: I hope so, otherwise I'll just be.

6

00:00:10.920 --> 00:00:12.090

Selah DeGering: going through it myself.

7

00:00:12.570 --> 00:00:14.099

Jennifer Fleischner: And I think it does.

8

00:00:14.429 --> 00:00:22.710

Selah DeGering: yeah, so I do have five prepared questions to make it easier for everybody.

9

00:00:23.100 --> 00:00:31.200

Selah DeGering: Okay, so my first question is: what is remarkable about the relationship between Elizabeth Keckly and Mary Lincoln?

10

00:00:35.160 --> 00:00:36.060

Jennifer Fleischner: um.

11

00:00:38.820 --> 00:00:39.540

Jennifer Fleischner: You know.

12

00:00:44.400 --> 00:00:51.840

Jennifer Fleischner: I'm not- you know, I wrote a book 20 years ago and that title, the word remarkable was not mine.

13

00:00:52.950 --> 00:00:55.500

Jennifer Fleischner: But I would say that um.

14

00:00:58.080 --> 00:00:58.950

Jennifer Fleischner: It's.

15

00:01:01.740 --> 00:01:09.990

Jennifer Fleischner: It's remarkable, to the extent that it was noticed, it was observed, you know Keckly was a known figure.

16

00:01:12.000 --> 00:01:16.200

Jennifer Fleischner: At the time, noticed in the White House.

17

00:01:17.670 --> 00:01:23.670

Jennifer Fleischner: After people understood their closeness, you know, that they.

18

00:01:26.010 --> 00:01:26.910

Jennifer Fleischner: They had.

19

00:01:28.530 --> 00:01:42.030



Jennifer Fleischner: I don't know how they understood the closeness exactly, but carefully. It was, you know, the language of the time, put it in the way you would imagine Keckly's loyalty to Mary Lincoln.

20

00:01:43.650 --> 00:01:51.780

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, helpfulness, loyalty, it wasn't- wasn't- it's not that they were seen as equals within the relationship itself, you see.

21

00:01:55.170 --> 00:02:00.870

Jennifer Fleischner: Suggestions or evidence of their.

22

00:02:02.190 --> 00:02:03.480

Jennifer Fleischner: A kind of.

23

00:02:05.010 --> 00:02:19.140

Jennifer Fleischner: exchange that went on, for example, Keckly asking Mary, you know, one of the things Keckly did with her freedom and her money was to.

24

00:02:20.280 --> 00:02:30.840

Jennifer Fleischner: create a Contraband Association and other words to you know, put it- put her money and her freedom to move around and do what she wanted.

25

00:02:31.950 --> 00:02:38.760

Jennifer Fleischner: towards racial uplift so opening a school, you know, essentially training black women to be.

26

00:02:39.840 --> 00:02:41.790

Jennifer Fleischner: Dressmakers, seamstresses.

27

00:02:43.500 --> 00:02:55.860

Jennifer Fleischner: And then the Contraband Association, so she, you know, she felt she could ask Mary Lincoln for money and Mary Lincoln would give it to her for that cause- for her causes.

28

00:02:57.150 --> 00:02:59.100

Jennifer Fleischner: She, after.

29

00:03:00.210 --> 00:03:12.930

Jennifer Fleischner: Lincoln's death- assassination- a couple years later, when they met in New York for what became the old clothes sale, I assume you've read my book, um.

30

00:03:14.520 --> 00:03:15.390

Jennifer Fleischner: You know.

31

00:03:17.130 --> 00:03:18.750

Jennifer Fleischner: There was.

32

00:03:21.480 --> 00:03:25.680

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, Keckly felt.

00:03:26.970 --> 00:03:33.750

Jennifer Fleischner: It reasonable and comfortable sort of trying, you know, enlisting Frederick Douglass.

34

00:03:35.160 --> 00:03:50.880

Jennifer Fleischner: And others- other black activists- to, you know, give a lecture series to help Mary Lincoln out, in other words, there was this [unintelligible] Keckly felt.

35

00:03:52.110 --> 00:03:52.920

Jennifer Fleischner: Um.

36

00:03:53.940 --> 00:04:08.670

Jennifer Fleischner: I think that suggests that kind of freedom, a sense of herself in a relationship with this woman that transcends- clearly transcends being, you know, a hired dressmaker. [unintelligible]

37

00:04:09.270 --> 00:04:27.030

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, women and their dressmakers, women in their, you know, hair salons even today, I suppose, you know, you have this- you talk, you know, there's a kind of- can be a gossipy, it can be a relationship, I think this did go past it- go beyond it.

38

00:04:28.470 --> 00:04:38.640

Jennifer Fleischner: And so, and again, you see, in Mary's letters, certainly the word friendship come up.

39

00:04:40.650 --> 00:04:41.940

Jennifer Fleischner: There's not.

40

00:04:43.560 --> 00:04:49.770

Jennifer Fleischner: Keckly doesn't use it in her book, she wouldn't use it in her book is my guess, but.

41

00:04:50.460 --> 00:04:59.910

Jennifer Fleischner: There aren't letters. We don't see letters currently that are, you know, I haven't seen any, you know, which that's- but, you know, she-

42

00:05:00.840 --> 00:05:14.430

Jennifer Fleischner: Even early on, you know, when she was in slavery, there's the one letter you can read to the, you know, one of the women who was her half sister and not- she had never been.

43

00:05:16.470 --> 00:05:21.090

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, in the position of a mistress and wasn't.

44

00:05:22.170 --> 00:05:30.270

Jennifer Fleischner: Fanny but this letter to Fanny speaks Keckly's sense of herself as.

45

00:05:31.920 --> 00:05:45.600

Jennifer Fleischner: Equal you know, even though not, of course, right, but her-the way she writes, The self possession, the [unintelligible] gossip frankly.

46

00:05:47.370 --> 00:05:50.820

Jennifer Fleischner: It comes from herself is the thing.

47

00:05:52.890 --> 00:05:57.690

Jennifer Fleischner: So maybe in the end that stands out.

48

00:05:59.520 --> 00:06:04.920

Jennifer Fleischner: I think that stands out and that's very striking, ,yeah. Does that help?

49

00:06:05.160 --> 00:06:05.520

Selah DeGering: Yeah.

50

00:06:07.440 --> 00:06:17.220

Selah DeGering: So these questions are the way that they are because I'm writing a revisionist history, and I am expecting the historical community to eat me alive.

51

00:06:19.530 --> 00:06:20.160

Selah DeGering: So.

52

00:06:21.390 --> 00:06:22.860

Selah DeGering: um so.

53

00:06:24.720 --> 00:06:36.870

Selah DeGering: I don't have the exact quote like on my person right now um but in Elizabeth's book which i've been studying rigorously, for the past two years um.

54

00:06:38.640 --> 00:06:49.530

Selah DeGering: She says something to the effect of Mary's business, the dress business, all of that, after, you know, the New York dress sale and things,

55

00:06:50.700 --> 00:06:56.670

Selah DeGering: have been constant trouble to her, um, which, I believe that sounds stressful.

56

00:06:58.170 --> 00:07:14.340

Selah DeGering: And she mentioned that she doesn't- she mentioned that Mary asks her about her personal life sometimes but less out of less because she cares and more out of curiosity.

57

00:07:14.700 --> 00:07:20.820

Selah DeGering: She says, and that Elizabeth's brief answers were not always satisfactory.

58

00:07:21.090 --> 00:07:23.070

Selah DeGering: I can pull up the direct quote if you want, but it was.

59

00:07:23.820 --> 00:07:25.650

Selah DeGering: Essentially, that.

60

00:07:25.770 --> 00:07:27.990

Selah DeGering: yeah um and.

61

00:07:29.010 --> 00:07:36.690

Selah DeGering: To me, so I was raised in a white family that had race issues with black people.

62

00:07:37.200 --> 00:07:38.790

Selah DeGering: um so.

63

00:07:40.710 --> 00:07:45.960

Selah DeGering: To me, you know I read this and I looked at it and I was like, "oh that doesn't sound like.

64

00:07:48.300 --> 00:08:08.010

Selah DeGering: An equal friendship, because we see Mary confiding in Elizabeth all the time, and Elizabeth always seeking to be sympathetic more or less, um, and yet Elizabeth states that when Mary occasionally asks about how things are going, she doesn't feel comfortable.

65

00:08:09.120 --> 00:08:11.010

Selah DeGering: doing the same and confiding in Mary.

66



00:08:13.350 --> 00:08:19.110

Selah DeGering: And, you know, that's-I feel like that's to be expected, with the relationships at the time.

67

00:08:20.370 --> 00:08:24.000

Selah DeGering: But simultaneously when you Google Elizabeth Keckly.

68

00:08:25.470 --> 00:08:32.280

Selah DeGering: All of that comes up or all of these articles about how they had this great friendship and everything was perfect and.

69

00:08:33.780 --> 00:08:34.350

Selah DeGering: You know.

70

00:08:34.620 --> 00:08:37.440

Selah DeGering: [unintelligible]

71

00:08:37.830 --> 00:08:55.440

Selah DeGering: Yeah and I've found it very frustrating, um, there is the- what museum, is it the Museum of the Daughters of the Revolution? I believe, um, yeah, so I have a friend that works there.

72

00:08:56.610 --> 00:09:04.620

Selah DeGering: She's getting her PhD in history as well and [unintelligible] so they.

73

00:09:06.060 --> 00:09:11.160

Selah DeGering: Are looking to put in an exhibit about Elizabeth Keckly and um.

74

00:09:16.020 --> 00:09:17.580

Selah DeGering: [unintelligible]

75

00:09:20.550 --> 00:09:21.420

Selah DeGering: [unintelligible]

76

00:09:24.510 --> 00:09:33.150

Selah DeGering: Some of my questions are have they read a book and or have they spoken to a black person about race relations ever.

77

00:09:35.640 --> 00:09:48.450

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, I think that the- what you're talking about, you know, if you read W.E.B. duBois' "The Veil", you know, the problem, the 20th century, have you read "Souls of Black Folk"?

78

00:09:49.710 --> 00:09:55.950

Jennifer Fleischner: He makes a point and I think this is the point you're making. You should look at that, look at the opening chapter.

79

00:09:56.580 --> 00:10:11.460

Jennifer Fleischner: He wrote in 1903 and he talks about living behind the veil and one of the, you know, black- black people behind the veil and one of the points he makes, and this is what you're talking about and I think it's true.

80

00:10:13.170 --> 00:10:25.800

Jennifer Fleischner: And certainly true and Keckly, you know, and Lincoln's relationship is that the black person knows way more about the white person, then.

81

00:10:27.120 --> 00:10:30.090

Jennifer Fleischner: Right, and that has to do.

82

00:10:31.410 --> 00:10:39.180

Jennifer Fleischner: With who's the one who's- who's watching, you know? Who's the one who's- who's got the stake in knowing everything, and, you know, Mary Lincoln.

83

00:10:40.890 --> 00:11:01.830

Jennifer Fleischner: um, yeah, I mean that- so the dynamic is not a mutual friendship and that's where, in my book, I did- again, this is 20- plus years ago, you know, say something about the problematic nature of the friendship, but, but the investment in.

84

00:11:03.540 --> 00:11:10.500

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, it comes up all the time, the investment in making Mary out to be so-

85

00:11:11.970 --> 00:11:15.510

Jennifer Fleischner: Seeing herself- them as equals it's just not.

86

00:11:16.170 --> 00:11:18.720

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible]

87

00:11:19.950 --> 00:11:21.810

Jennifer Fleischner: And Keckly.

88

00:11:25.140 --> 00:11:30.330

Jennifer Fleischner: I think the other thing to keep in mind is.

89

00:11:32.460 --> 00:11:34.410

Jennifer Fleischner: If you read

90

00:11:36.180 --> 00:11:40.320

Jennifer Fleischner: Other- if you read slave narratives, Keckly's is not a slave narrative.

91

00:11:41.940 --> 00:11:42.660

Jennifer Fleischner: But.

92

00:11:43.890 --> 00:11:50.070

Jennifer Fleischner: It's- it's pretty clear in this long tradition that [unintelligible]

93

00:11:51.240 --> 00:11:52.350

Jennifer Fleischner: That one of the.

94

00:11:54.330 --> 00:12:10.710

Jennifer Fleischner: Benefits, one of the gains of being free is you don't have to tell everything, you know, [unintelligible] you- you- you don't tell everything, right, you keep things to yourself. Writing freely is calculated. She talks about writing freely in her preface.

95

00:12:11.700 --> 00:12:14.670

Jennifer Fleischner: That- that people will complain that she wrote too freely.

96

00:12:16.080 --> 00:12:31.200

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible] really means not saying, not being obliged, right, to say everything, and so I think also, again, I wanted to distinguish between Keckly's sense of the relationship.

97

00:12:32.490 --> 00:12:36.750

Jennifer Fleischner: From Mary's and I would say that Keckly.

98

00:12:37.980 --> 00:12:41.640

Jennifer Fleischner: It's possible that Keckly.

99

00:12:43.770 --> 00:12:46.230

Jennifer Fleischner: Understood herself as equal.

100

00:12:47.880 --> 00:12:57.420

Jennifer Fleischner: And, but not from the other side, and so you know, Mary wouldn't have seen it that way or couldn't get past a certain point, except when she.

101

00:12:58.620 --> 00:13:04.140

Jennifer Fleischner: And it's very clear how much dependence on [unintelligible] right.

102

00:13:06.030 --> 00:13:08.130

Jennifer Fleischner: And so, in some ways.

103

00:13:09.330 --> 00:13:10.830

Jennifer Fleischner: That dependence.

104

00:13:15.000 --> 00:13:20.670

Jennifer Fleischner: Gives Keckly a certain kind of power, though of course not, you know because it costs a lot.

105

00:13:20.760 --> 00:13:29.640

Jennifer Fleischner: Right at the end, she doesn't want to go with her, she, you know, the Old Clothes business, you know, there's a lot of costs there.

106

00:13:31.590 --> 00:13:37.080

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, so, no, it's right to absolutely question that. I'm kind of.

107

00:13:38.400 --> 00:13:47.250

Jennifer Fleischner: Surprised to hear that you don't and that what you're reading, the criticism you're reading or whatever it is you're reading.

108

00:13:51.750 --> 00:14:01.380

Jennifer Fleischner: Doesn't say that because my impression is that a lot of the criticism written certainly [unintelligible].

109

00:14:03.030 --> 00:14:08.250

Jennifer Fleischner: Does address the problem at, you know, the- the problematic, you know.

110

00:14:08.880 --> 00:14:22.860

Selah DeGering: So, like other adaptations of this story, so there's a play I believe, it's called "Mary T and Lizzie K" um there's a novelization.

111

00:14:23.250 --> 00:14:23.550

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah.

112

00:14:25.470 --> 00:14:25.890

Selah DeGering: Yeah.



113

00:14:30.180 --> 00:14:34.950

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, I get a- no, I- yeah, I get annoyed, so I just.

114

00:14:35.550 --> 00:14:36.720

Selah DeGering: Oh, no, I understand.

115

00:14:37.980 --> 00:14:53.550

Selah DeGering: I don't blame you um yeah I personally avoided reading the adaptations because I didn't want them to color my interpretation of the record, but my- my mentor, my Professor-advisor- person did read them.

116

00:14:54.660 --> 00:15:07.410

Selah DeGering: He was reading what I wrote and he was like, "this is not synonymous with what is in these other adaptations that are present" and what I have noticed is that a lot of these adaptations, that some of these.

117

00:15:11.340 --> 00:15:23.220

Selah DeGering: I want to say, lazy interpretations [unintelligible] I feel like anybody [unintelligible] into it in context can see that there's a dynamic issue.

118

00:15:24.420 --> 00:15:24.990

Selah DeGering: But.

119

00:15:26.790 --> 00:15:27.420

Selah DeGering: Anyways.

120

00:15:29.100 --> 00:15:31.350

Selah DeGering: I've seen a lot of.

121

00:15:34.680 --> 00:15:52.320

Selah DeGering: Predominantly white women doing this and that's not- I mean, my husband's white, my kids are mixed, like it's not, like, explicitly a race thing, but like, as far as perspective is concerned, I think that, um, you know, may be possible.

122

00:15:53.970 --> 00:16:04.890

Selah DeGering: That, I don't know, wanting to see yourself in the story and identifying with whoever is closer to you which may be Mary

123

00:16:06.570 --> 00:16:10.920

Selah DeGering: You know, we're talking about the Civil War race relations, things are kind of tense there.

124

00:16:11.940 --> 00:16:25.260

Selah DeGering: And wanting to see, like, one example of a white person that isn't terrible in the Civil War or trying to tell a story of hope in the Civil War, that kind of thing, um.

125

00:16:26.310 --> 00:16:39.450

Selah DeGering: You know, and it leads to a lot of defense of Mary Lincoln, a lot of "not her fault, she was mentally ill" or "it's not her fault and it doesn't matter because she was a feminist icon" and.

126

00:16:40.680 --> 00:16:44.040

Selah DeGering: You know, just the historical community. So.

127

00:16:45.960 --> 00:16:47.490

Selah DeGering: My friend who is getting the PhD.

128

00:16:48.930 --> 00:17:05.520

Selah DeGering: She has written her former theses on- we're from Louisiana um, by the way, just for context, um, [unintelligible] she wrote her previous theses on.

129

00:17:06.660 --> 00:17:07.650

Selah DeGering: How.

130

00:17:09.690 --> 00:17:16.350

Selah DeGering: We talk about the black families and slaves that served in plantation homes.

131

00:17:17.370 --> 00:17:28.350

Selah DeGering: So she, you know, went around to various plantation homes and went through their tours and she took notes on whether they mentioned those families at all, whether we know their names.

132

00:17:29.460 --> 00:17:32.850

Selah DeGering: And her current work is on trying to restore.

133

00:17:33.990 --> 00:17:44.430

Selah DeGering: Some of that history by trying to track down some of these relatives of these families and seeing if they have any oral history about who was there.

134

00:17:46.290 --> 00:17:50.100

Selah DeGering: So that's her work and.

135

00:17:54.300 --> 00:17:54.810

Selah DeGering: Well.

136

00:17:57.360 --> 00:18:00.510

Selah DeGering: I forgot where I was going with that, but it was relevant.

137

00:18:02.190 --> 00:18:02.850

Jennifer Fleischner: Okay.

138

00:18:03.150 --> 00:18:03.930

Selah DeGering: I swear.

139

00:18:05.040 --> 00:18:06.540

Selah DeGering: Oh, but.

140

00:18:09.150 --> 00:18:23.220

Selah DeGering: Yeah just there there's a disconnection between, um, what may be considered realistic for the time and what we are wanting to see now looking back because we're in.

141

00:18:24.870 --> 00:18:27.240

Selah DeGering: A new era of race, war, I feel like.

142

00:18:29.010 --> 00:18:33.810

Selah DeGering: There's just a lot of contention surrounding that topic and it's been building up for a long time.

143

00:18:35.430 --> 00:18:45.090

Selah DeGering: And so I can see the appeal of trying to tell a story of hope um about that, through these characters given that.

144

00:18:46.170 --> 00:18:50.070

Selah DeGering: You know, it's based on a true story so.

145

00:18:52.500 --> 00:18:52.920

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah.

146

00:18:52.950 --> 00:18:54.870

Selah DeGering: I think- I think that was where I was going.

147

00:18:57.240 --> 00:19:00.300

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible]

148

00:19:01.440 --> 00:19:02.250

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible]

149

00:19:07.620 --> 00:19:30.030

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible]

150

00:19:31.320 --> 00:19:37.860

Jennifer Fleischner: Mary Lincoln relied on Keckly for many, many, many things, you know, beyond [unintelligible].

151

00:19:39.930 --> 00:19:46.620

Jennifer Fleischner: Mean, I think that would be a really interesting angle to take. Why a musical?

152

00:19:48.510 --> 00:19:48.810

Selah DeGering: Ah.

153

00:19:51.570 --> 00:19:52.470

Jennifer Fleischner: Just

curious. 154

00:19:52.980 --> 00:20:04.710

Selah DeGering: So, from my reading of Elizabeth's book, like, the kind of person that she was, she, with reason, kept a lot of things herself.

155

00:20:04.920 --> 00:20:06.360

Selah DeGering: She seemed very opinionated.

156

00:20:06.900 --> 00:20:11.610

Selah DeGering: Um, you know, knew her perspective on things and.

157

00:20:12.900 --> 00:20:16.680

Selah DeGering: Was smart enough not to share it most of the time.

158

00:20:19.200 --> 00:20:32.670

Selah DeGering: And so, a musical gives her the opportunity to speak her mind and express her feelings outside of the context of dialogue and.

159

00:20:33.990 --> 00:20:34.410

Selah DeGering: Um.

160

00:20:35.610 --> 00:20:42.180



Selah DeGering: Yeah, so we get the opportunity to see more of her as opposed to watching her watch others the whole time.

161

00:20:42.750 --> 00:20:43.290

Jennifer Fleischner: Mm hmm.

162

00:20:44.430 --> 00:20:44.880

Jennifer Fleischner: Right.

163

00:20:46.440 --> 00:20:49.740

Selah DeGering: Right, it also helps with, like, time skips and some.

164

00:20:51.480 --> 00:20:52.710

Selah DeGering: Time transitions.

165

00:20:53.010 --> 00:20:57.420

Selah DeGering: Right, I can say this happened, and this happened, and this happened, this happened.

166

00:20:57.690 --> 00:20:59.850

Selah DeGering: But it's not boring because there's a catchy tune behind it.

167

00:21:00.480 --> 00:21:01.770

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible]

168

00:21:03.120 --> 00:21:13.620

Jennifer Fleischner: And do you see yourself in the musical? I assume that you mean it's like an interior monologue, she's singing something that she that she's not necessarily saying to another person, right?

169

00:21:13.680 --> 00:21:19.020

Selah DeGering: There are, yes, so the rule with musicals that I've learned in college is.

170

00:21:20.100 --> 00:21:20.670

Selah DeGering: That.

171

00:21:23.460 --> 00:21:34.380

Selah DeGering: There is only a song when the feeling, or the energy is so strong that it cannot be communicated in any other way but song.

172

00:21:34.860 --> 00:21:36.060

Jennifer Fleischner: Right, right.

173

00:21:36.690 --> 00:21:38.010

Selah DeGering: Um so.

174

00:21:38.700 --> 00:21:59.610

Selah DeGering: Right, yeah, and like I said in the beginning, I feel like Elizabeth's sense of humanity as a historical figure has been stripped. I mean, she's not the only one with that issue, but I saw her, I felt touched by her story, I saw myself in it, um, and I wanted to bring that out.

175

00:22:00.330 --> 00:22:04.230

Jennifer Fleischner: Um do you use her own words in the music?

176

00:22:04.950 --> 00:22:05.130

So.

177

00:22:06.240 --> 00:22:08.280

Selah DeGering: I do, so there are.

178

00:22:10.350 --> 00:22:24.660

Selah DeGering: So Elizabeth narrates her own story. She has, you know, interjections where, you know, dialogue isn't happening, where she's like, "and for historical context, this is where we are, this is what's going on." I take quotes from the book and.

179

00:22:25.800 --> 00:22:26.730

Jennifer Fleischner: That's nice.

180

00:22:26.820 --> 00:22:27.840

Selah DeGering: Discuss that yeah.

181

00:22:29.640 --> 00:22:30.660

Jennifer Fleischner: I'd love to see it.

182

00:22:32.040 --> 00:22:33.330

Selah DeGering: I hope you like it.

183

00:22:34.590 --> 00:22:35.760

Selah DeGering: So the big.

184

00:22:37.650 --> 00:22:40.650

Selah DeGering: So I would say that the most.

185

00:22:40.740 --> 00:22:48.150

Selah DeGering: Revisionist of the history as far as this is concerned, is that I.

186

00:22:50.190 --> 00:22:55.380

Selah DeGering: Okay, I wanted to give Elizabeth a sense of power over the narrative.

187

00:22:56.580 --> 00:23:20.430

Selah DeGering: And I wanted her to be more than just someone who knew about all of these white people, um, so there's that and then also , in her book, I feel that the sections where she gets the most passionate in talking about her life are.

188

00:23:23.130 --> 00:23:25.920

Selah DeGering: Essentially anytime she's talking about Abraham Lincoln. He's like.

189

00:23:26.460 --> 00:23:45.990

Selah DeGering: The best, you know, he's the noblest on God's earth, he, you know, she will just pontificate on and on about how great amazing he is and he's so emotionally available, etc, followed by a snide comment about, "by the way, Mary hates flowers and animals and everything."

190

00:23:46.650 --> 00:23:48.090

Selah DeGering: And then she, like, won't elaborate.

191

00:23:48.300 --> 00:23:49.740

Selah DeGering: Just seems very petty to me.

192

00:23:51.390 --> 00:24:12.930

Selah DeGering: So I wrote a version of the story, wherein Elizabeth falls in love with Abraham Lincoln, um, and there's not- there's no, like, raunchy affair that happens- um, I wanted to be respectful of what was.

193

00:24:14.340 --> 00:24:17.430

Selah DeGering: What- what probably happened, which is nothing.

194

00:24:18.510 --> 00:24:35.610

Selah DeGering: I wanted to be respectful of the people involved um so it's not written to be this great scandalous drama it's just two people that are struggling through grief that have a lot, kind of, on their plates.

195

00:24:36.690 --> 00:24:38.460

Selah DeGering: That don't receive.

196

00:24:39.600 --> 00:24:49.470

Selah DeGering: Comfort from anybody else, they don't have confidants of their own until they turn to each other, um, you know the moment in Elizabeth's book, where she.

197

00:24:49.950 --> 00:25:07.770

Selah DeGering: Discusses watching Abraham Lincoln cry over his dead son and how he talks to her and confided in her about that, and how that touched her and how that changed her perspective. Moments like that, I feel, are.

198

00:25:09.390 --> 00:25:20.850

Selah DeGering: Indicative of some degree of softness on her part, how far that goes I don't think we can ever know just because we weren't there and they're not here to tell us, but.

199

00:25:21.930 --> 00:25:22.590

Selah DeGering: Yes.

200

00:25:25.500 --> 00:25:42.180

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, so, um, you know, that scene is the- was the inspiration for George Saunders novel "Lincoln at the Bar" which, if you haven't read he quotes Keckly's book quite a bit and that novel, it's a really good novel.

201

00:25:42.900 --> 00:25:43.680

Selah DeGering: I will look into it.

202

00:25:44.160 --> 00:25:48.570

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah well anyway, what other questions?  
You had a few others.

203

00:25:48.600 --> 00:25:49.980

Jennifer Fleischner: Yes, yeah.

204

00:25:50.490 --> 00:25:50.910

Oh.

205

00:25:53.940 --> 00:25:57.030

Selah DeGering: To your knowledge did Elizabeth has any  
close confidants?

206

00:26:01.020 --> 00:26:01.680

Jennifer Fleischner: Um.

207

00:26:03.690 --> 00:26:07.050



Jennifer Fleischner: I don't know what you mean. You know,  
I, she had friends.

208

00:26:07.140 --> 00:26:09.210

Jennifer Fleischner: And she had a circle of people.

209

00:26:09.810 --> 00:26:12.060

Jennifer Fleischner: The point of her book was not to.

210

00:26:12.270 --> 00:26:13.170

Jennifer Fleischner: Write about.

211

00:26:13.260 --> 00:26:13.950

Jennifer Fleischner: That.

212

00:26:13.980 --> 00:26:19.590

Jennifer Fleischner: I mean, I think that's The other thing,  
so, you know, the end she doesn't mention. You.

213

00:26:20.040 --> 00:26:43.440

Jennifer Fleischner: Have this idea about Lincoln she doesn't  
mention other relationships, she believes that, you know, her  
mother, I found a record of Aggie- Aggie having a son, you know,

there are lots of things left out, and I think that um, you know, her age, she had an aim in writing and less.

214

00:26:45.540 --> 00:26:53.280

Jennifer Fleischner: Memoir and in that sense, I mean the book was written at a time and a place it was pitched to sell.

215

00:26:54.900 --> 00:26:55.800

Jennifer Fleischner: And

216

00:26:59.160 --> 00:27:03.270

Jennifer Fleischner: And she talks anyway, about the reason she wrote it.

217

00:27:03.390 --> 00:27:09.480

Jennifer Fleischner: In the preface so- so she does not dwell on her personal life.

218

00:27:10.560 --> 00:27:11.340

Jennifer Fleischner: Outside of.

219

00:27:11.520 --> 00:27:13.050

Jennifer Fleischner: The house, right, so.

220

00:27:14.430 --> 00:27:24.300

Jennifer Fleischner: She definitely had a circle of friends, the middle, you know the black Community she lived in the churches, she was a member if you can find.

221

00:27:25.440 --> 00:27:30.300

Jennifer Fleischner: I talked a little bit about that, you know, the- the families.

222

00:27:30.510 --> 00:27:33.720

Jennifer Fleischner: The families, she lived with, um.

223

00:27:35.610 --> 00:27:39.750

Jennifer Fleischner: But she does not talk about that- that's not.

224

00:27:40.110 --> 00:27:42.120

Selah DeGering: She- she mentioned that she.

225

00:27:44.100 --> 00:27:46.890

Selah DeGering: Was invited as a bridesmaid and six weddings.

226

00:27:46.890 --> 00:27:47.550

Selah DeGering: One summer.

227

00:27:49.350 --> 00:27:53.610

Jennifer Fleischner: When she was in slave and wasn't you know, and she has no.

228

00:27:55.320 --> 00:28:00.840

Jennifer Fleischner: She hasn't mentioned, you know, missing anybody and also it's not clear there.

229

00:28:01.860 --> 00:28:09.540

Jennifer Fleischner: What that means, you could be a bridesmaid like literally obeyed and they're watching people getting married.

230

00:28:09.570 --> 00:28:13.620

Jennifer Fleischner: True, we- it's not clear to me what that means.

231

00:28:14.940 --> 00:28:18.060

Jennifer Fleischner: And so, or who I tried to figure out.

232

00:28:18.690 --> 00:28:20.070

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, just- just.

233

00:28:20.130 --> 00:28:39.210

Jennifer Fleischner: So, you know, the reason I wrote the book was her- Keckly [unintelligible] and so it was to bring her in history, the way you know rather than revise that history um and but you know she- she tells us.

234

00:28:41.190 --> 00:28:46.410

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, she- she's the- she's the reason we know about her, right, you know?

235

00:28:47.460 --> 00:28:51.360

Jennifer Fleischner: She wouldn't be- you know, if not for her own writing the book.

236

00:28:52.860 --> 00:28:56.010

Jennifer Fleischner: And she's going to control what's in it.

237

00:28:57.750 --> 00:29:02.970

Jennifer Fleischner: So she doesn't suit- so- I don't know, you know, the way to get at that.

238

00:29:07.080 --> 00:29:26.460

Jennifer Fleischner: Would be through not her own words, it would have to be through someone doing the research on other middle class blacks are on the churches, I looked at the church records to see where her name came up, it would have to be.

239

00:29:27.480 --> 00:29:28.170

Jennifer Fleischner: You know.

240

00:29:29.340 --> 00:29:37.740

Selah DeGering: Yeah, I was just asking because I personally couldn't find anything, but I feel that in her book, there are places where she mentioned friends, she just doesn't name.

241

00:29:38.820 --> 00:29:44.550

Selah DeGering: Where she's- she's walking through the town with friends or she mentioned.

242

00:29:45.900 --> 00:29:48.570

Selah DeGering: A close friend of mine and doesn't.

243

00:29:48.600 --> 00:29:50.820

Selah DeGering: Say who, [unintelligible].

244

00:29:50.970 --> 00:29:57.870

Jennifer Fleischner: Or she- right, or she- she organizes the contraband association with the, you know, people in the Church.

245

00:29:59.040 --> 00:29:59.460

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah.

246

00:29:59.490 --> 00:30:07.530

Selah DeGering: Yeah. Oh, I make a joke about that in the script about her being very fun at parties.

247

00:30:10.890 --> 00:30:13.920

Selah DeGering: And Abraham Lincoln's like "or very good friend" and she was like "yeah."

248

00:30:15.900 --> 00:30:16.470

Jennifer Fleischner: yeah.

249

00:30:17.640 --> 00:30:18.030

Selah DeGering: um.

250

00:30:18.600 --> 00:30:22.380

Jennifer Fleischner: it's worth your reading if you- I think I quoted from it, but the.

251

00:30:24.480 --> 00:30:39.030

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, the [unintelligible] you know, there was a eulogy that- that was you know, she was eulogized when she died. It was a fairly long eulogy and it's in the top, you know he talks about her presence.

252

00:30:41.520 --> 00:30:42.060

Jennifer Fleischner: But.

253

00:30:43.320 --> 00:30:46.380

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, you know it's a good question. You'd have to.

254

00:30:47.400 --> 00:30:48.270

Jennifer Fleischner: invent that.

255

00:30:50.160 --> 00:31:06.540



Selah DeGering: I do have to. Like, the context of the way she is telling the story is that she has an apprentice that she's gotten very close to who asks her about what her book is about and what is in there, because she can't read.

256

00:31:08.160 --> 00:31:12.120

Selah DeGering: And Elizabeth then tells the story that we find in the book.

257

00:31:14.850 --> 00:31:15.390

Jennifer Fleischner:

Yeah.

258

00:31:15.480 --> 00:31:24.180

Selah DeGering: So I got to put it in there, because I wanted to talk about the people that she helped and the struggles that she saw, I wanted-

259

00:31:26.010 --> 00:31:33.210

Selah DeGering: So essentially, Elizabeth's arc, I suppose, the purpose of her being there or main objective as a character.

260

00:31:33.720 --> 00:31:38.310

Selah DeGering: Is that she's very loving and she.

261

00:31:39.360 --> 00:31:42.810

Selah DeGering: Wants to serve others and help other people.

262

00:31:45.000 --> 00:31:49.110

Selah DeGering: And her caring about how other people feel so much.

263

00:31:50.370 --> 00:31:57.900

Selah DeGering: Is ultimately her downfall, I suppose, as far as, like, the narrative is concerned.

264

00:31:58.440 --> 00:31:59.340

Selah DeGering: Yeah, um.

265

00:32:00.960 --> 00:32:04.290

Selah DeGering: Where she wants things to be proper, she wants things to be correct.

266

00:32:05.790 --> 00:32:06.660

Selah DeGering: And

267

00:32:08.070 --> 00:32:13.980

Selah DeGering: You know, she wants to serve her role in its fullest everywhere, she goes on to a detriment to herself.

268

00:32:16.740 --> 00:32:21.360

Jennifer Fleischner: She mentions good friends hear Lincoln's last speech.

269

00:32:23.520 --> 00:32:26.610

Jennifer Fleischner: In the White House before he was assassinated.

270

00:32:27.660 --> 00:32:38.520

Jennifer Fleischner: The night before, a couple of nights, his last speech he gave on a Tuesday I think it was, so a few nights before she- she asked to bring a friend to the White House and that's in her book.

271

00:32:39.150 --> 00:32:40.350

Jennifer Fleischner: Yes, yeah.

272

00:32:42.270 --> 00:32:45.390

Selah DeGering: I definitely wanted to put in there that she has a life outside of.

273

00:32:46.530 --> 00:32:47.340

Selah DeGering: The White House.

274

00:32:47.940 --> 00:32:56.580

Selah DeGering: Um I definitely found it frustrating reading it through the first couple of times because I was like, "Okay, but what about you?"

275

00:32:59.280 --> 00:33:01.440

Jennifer Fleischner: Remember her audience.

276

00:33:01.470 --> 00:33:02.640

Jennifer Fleischner: She pointed.

277

00:33:03.060 --> 00:33:06.270

Jennifer Fleischner: Out a purpose and to show her.

278

00:33:08.070 --> 00:33:11.070

Jennifer Fleischner: Also to- to show.

279

00:33:12.480 --> 00:33:16.320

Jennifer Fleischner: Herself as a free black woman, you know, in a white world.

280

00:33:17.430 --> 00:33:20.010

Selah DeGering: Yes, I think that she does a very good job of that.

281

00:33:21.270 --> 00:33:32.160

Selah DeGering: [unintelligible] self possessed and intentionally navigating this maze of social expectations, yeah, yeah.

282

00:33:33.480 --> 00:33:35.700

Selah DeGering: So um, let's see.

283

00:33:36.930 --> 00:33:50.460

Selah DeGering: What is your opinion, if any, on the relationship or potential relationship of, like, which any, like, any kind: friendship, a confidant.

284

00:33:51.810 --> 00:33:56.430

Selah DeGering: A person that works in your house, um, between Elizabeth and Abraham Lincoln?

285

00:34:01.230 --> 00:34:07.740

Jennifer Fleischner: Well, I don't read that, I don't see what you're talking about seeing her but, um, but that's okay.

286

00:34:09.720 --> 00:34:10.830

Selah DeGering: I didn't expect you to.

287

00:34:11.970 --> 00:34:14.490

Jennifer Fleischner: I also don't see her as loving.

288

00:34:14.520 --> 00:34:16.830

Jennifer Fleischner: In the way you're describing actually.

289

00:34:17.160 --> 00:34:20.220

Jennifer Fleischner: Okay, um, but- but that's okay, too.

290

00:34:22.080 --> 00:34:22.920

Jennifer Fleischner: I  
think.

291

00:34:24.210 --> 00:34:25.650

Jennifer Fleischner: I think that.

292

00:34:27.270 --> 00:34:29.670

Jennifer Fleischner: One of the things she- she.

293

00:34:30.930 --> 00:34:35.190

Jennifer Fleischner: Talks about a lot is Mary Lincoln's, like, out of control. This.

294

00:34:36.570 --> 00:34:44.670

Jennifer Fleischner: And particularly around the mourning, around that scene, and I think in that stoicism that she.

295

00:34:48.030 --> 00:34:52.890

Jennifer Fleischner: Learned to prosper, probably the self to survival.

296

00:34:55.080 --> 00:34:57.090

Jennifer Fleischner: Part of her identity.

297

00:34:59.250 --> 00:34:59.850

Jennifer Fleischner: Is.

298

00:35:01.110 --> 00:35:07.080

Jennifer Fleischner: Something that I think, and I think also she might have seen mean, I think that her.

299

00:35:08.640 --> 00:35:09.690

Jennifer Fleischner: connection.

300

00:35:10.770 --> 00:35:17.640

Jennifer Fleischner: Such as is to Lincoln had to do with it kind of respect and, and.

301

00:35:21.000 --> 00:35:32.640

Jennifer Fleischner: And he was a depressive guy, he was depressed, you know. That kind of connection in terms of mourning and doing in a different way and.

302

00:35:35.340 --> 00:35:36.480

Jennifer Fleischner: And so.

303

00:35:37.800 --> 00:35:45.150

Jennifer Fleischner: I think, maybe some of it had to do with that and some of it, maybe had to do with they're both.



304

00:35:47.730 --> 00:35:50.190

Jennifer Fleischner: In the position of having to deal with Mary.

305

00:35:51.690 --> 00:35:52.500

Jennifer Fleischner: Actually.

306

00:35:53.040 --> 00:35:53.250

Selah DeGering: Yep.

307

00:35:54.360 --> 00:36:00.390

Jennifer Fleischner: And so I see that. I see also, Lincoln is pretty accessible.

308

00:36:02.280 --> 00:36:03.120

Jennifer Fleischner: And

309

00:36:06.870 --> 00:36:22.170

Jennifer Fleischner: So that scene they're looking at a window there you know with the goats and all that comment about not you know, Mary doesn't like goats is a comment, I think, partly to establish.

310

00:36:24.060 --> 00:36:31.350

Jennifer Fleischner: The what she shares, you know sort of a real connection, where she actually shares with Lincoln or identifies.

311

00:36:31.680 --> 00:36:33.660

Jennifer Fleischner: And Lincoln, you know, when he writes about.

312

00:36:35.220 --> 00:36:42.450

Jennifer Fleischner: Slavery before he's President and he talks about he talks about is the system of Labor.

313

00:36:43.980 --> 00:36:57.630

Jennifer Fleischner: And you know as race, you know, he was racist, he had this idea blacks and whites can't live together, it all sorts of things you know, I didn't- in the Douglass-Lincoln debates.

314

00:36:58.290 --> 00:37:16.710

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, he doesn't offend race and so when he talks about slavery, it is a system of Labor where you don't get the fruits of your Labor and that's the injustice of it like that's profoundly the injustice, and I think his understanding of work and Labor.

315

00:37:17.820 --> 00:37:20.610

Jennifer Fleischner: Would have been something correctly understood.

316

00:37:21.660 --> 00:37:34.020

Jennifer Fleischner: She talks about that explicitly, you know, being worth her salt. She's very bright, all of that, about Labor and we're getting paid for it and not getting paid for it.

317

00:37:35.340 --> 00:37:39.810

Jennifer Fleischner: So I find I, my impression, like, if I were going to-

318

00:37:42.180 --> 00:37:50.130

Jennifer Fleischner: So, no, but also, you know, Lincoln lived in a man's world, so he's- he's not going to have a close friendship with her.

319

00:37:50.700 --> 00:37:52.410

Jennifer Fleischner: And I mean the White House was a man's.

320

00:37:52.500 --> 00:37:57.750

Jennifer Fleischner: World I mean that was part of Mary's problem with it too.

321

00:37:58.980 --> 00:37:59.370

Jennifer Fleischner: But.

322

00:38:00.990 --> 00:38:05.220

Jennifer Fleischner: So I think that, to the extent that there's a connection, it's around.

323

00:38:06.690 --> 00:38:10.830

Jennifer Fleischner: Work, it's around ways of mourning and.

324

00:38:15.120 --> 00:38:23.610

Jennifer Fleischner: And also an alliance to, you know, around managing Mary, frankly.

325

00:38:24.840 --> 00:38:30.630

Selah DeGering: That is actually- those points that you just listed are actually exactly what I talk about.

326

00:38:32.010 --> 00:38:33.600

Selah DeGering: That's what their connection is based on.

327

00:38:34.110 --> 00:38:35.790

Selah DeGering: Um and.

328

00:38:37.200 --> 00:38:42.930

Selah DeGering: You know that's- that's- that, um I was intrigued by.

329

00:38:44.670 --> 00:38:54.030

Selah DeGering: Elizabeth's portrayal of Abraham Lincoln, because I feel like it's different than a lot of the others that we see on the internet and, like, the historical narrative.

330

00:38:55.080 --> 00:39:01.080

Selah DeGering: Where Abraham Lincoln is melancholy, and probably chronically depressed, and.

331

00:39:01.650 --> 00:39:03.060

Selah DeGering: Um, does a lot of.

332

00:39:03.570 --> 00:39:18.180

Selah DeGering: Um, moping and brooding, whereas in all of these, like, little scenes that Elizabeth chooses to write out about Abraham Lincoln, he's telling jokes and being clever.

333

00:39:18.660 --> 00:39:20.580

Selah DeGering: Or he's merry.

334

00:39:22.380 --> 00:39:24.840

Jennifer Fleischner: Heart of man, I mean that's a big part of his.

335

00:39:24.960 --> 00:39:42.270

Jennifer Fleischner: The historical record on him, and if you read, like, you know, there's tons of stuff on Lincoln but both of those are written about a lot. The depressive Lincoln and the rock, the rowdy, raucous guy- like, liking-to-tell-stories Lincoln.

336

00:39:42.690 --> 00:39:43.800

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, yeah.

337

00:39:44.100 --> 00:39:49.020

Selah DeGering: I tried to incorporate both, um. I just felt it was.

338

00:39:51.600 --> 00:39:52.080

Selah DeGering: I don't know.

339

00:39:53.280 --> 00:39:54.180

Selah DeGering: Funny.

340

00:39:55.200 --> 00:40:06.000

Selah DeGering: Interesting, it was interesting to me that she seems to address that part of him more than the part that.

341

00:40:07.260 --> 00:40:08.850

Selah DeGering: Broods endlessly.

342

00:40:09.630 --> 00:40:11.610

Selah DeGering: The kind of angsty, um.

343

00:40:12.840 --> 00:40:17.340

Selah DeGering: Yeah, I just thought that was interesting- an interesting note, um, for me.

344

00:40:17.970 --> 00:40:19.200

Selah DeGering: Yeah, um.

345

00:40:23.250 --> 00:40:28.350

Selah DeGering: Have you received any backlash or negative attention for telling the story, and if so, why?

346

00:40:30.420 --> 00:40:31.770

Jennifer Fleischner: Again, you know.

347

00:40:34.140 --> 00:40:40.860

Jennifer Fleischner: Again, when I, this was a of work of the 1990s and early 2000s.

348

00:40:41.970 --> 00:41:01.950

Jennifer Fleischner: And I am white and I also wrote- the book I wrote before this was on women slave narratives and it was this psychoanalytic reading, actually, about the legacy and it was talking about a mixed race identity and I got a lot of.

349

00:41:03.870 --> 00:41:07.650

Jennifer Fleischner: Lots and lots of- it was considered a breakthrough book.

350



00:41:08.850 --> 00:41:12.840

Jennifer Fleischner: Literally called that, and that book and.

351

00:41:13.980 --> 00:41:15.030

Jennifer Fleischner: And Keckly.

352

00:41:18.270 --> 00:41:30.570

Jennifer Fleischner: Again, you know it still stands, I don't understand why it's the only biography of Keckly. there's a lot of work to be done. If someone- if people would do it, there's one person doing it, but I think that.

353

00:41:31.620 --> 00:41:36.750

Jennifer Fleischner: To the extent I got backlash, it was then, at the time.

354

00:41:39.180 --> 00:41:40.140

Jennifer Fleischner: And it was.

355

00:41:43.230 --> 00:41:44.490

Jennifer Fleischner: Kind of basic.

356

00:41:47.220 --> 00:41:54.870

Jennifer Fleischner: Well, the backlash came from all sorts. I'm a Northerner, so it came as.

357

00:41:58.320 --> 00:42:16.920

Jennifer Fleischner: "Yankee coming to tell us about us." Now, some that came from white people, and now that is totally different now. Totally different scene. It also came a little bit as being white and going into this.

358

00:42:18.120 --> 00:42:22.380

Jennifer Fleischner: And the support I got was very important to me.

359

00:42:23.790 --> 00:42:32.880

Jennifer Fleischner: From- from the places I got it, the scholars, the people who really supported my work and made a huge difference to me at the time.

360

00:42:34.890 --> 00:42:41.130

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible] but, when it strikes me now, more than anything is that the interest then.

361

00:42:42.180 --> 00:42:52.770

Jennifer Fleischner: Always the invitations, I thought, everything was from the Lincoln world, the Lincoln world, and

and the interests of Mary Lincoln, and it was very much focused on that.

362

00:42:53.430 --> 00:43:17.340

Jennifer Fleischner: And, and yes, Keckly was absolutely interesting and part of it, but as I think you've pointed- you pointed out consumed into that narrative. Now it's totally the opposite. Every- and I get a lot of calls- [unintelligible] and it's about Keckly because now, the interest is as it should have been then.

363

00:43:18.750 --> 00:43:28.890

Jennifer Fleischner: But it wasn't on the black woman who was the whole point of my writing the book, but I couldn't have sold it as a

biography of.

364

00:43:30.000 --> 00:43:38.220

Jennifer Fleischner: A black. As her stand alone it wouldn't have worked anyway, the Lincoln's have to be part of it, so I think that.

365

00:43:39.660 --> 00:43:41.250

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, that's where.

366

00:43:42.360 --> 00:43:52.470

Jennifer Fleischner: I would like to see more being done on- on Keckly as you're suggesting, apart from the Lincoln's. Is it possible, is it even-

367

00:43:52.740 --> 00:43:53.340

Selah DeGering: Is there a.

368

00:43:53.400 --> 00:43:57.660

Jennifer Fleischner: -A point to it, I don't know, so.

369

00:43:59.610 --> 00:44:00.120

Jennifer Fleischner: And

370

00:44:01.620 --> 00:44:06.630

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, I am also not as close to it all, as I used to be.

371

00:44:07.770 --> 00:44:18.540

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, I- it's not like I've gone on to do amazing other things, but it's been a long time- a lot of it sticks with me more than I.

372

00:44:18.660 --> 00:44:19.920

Jennifer Fleischner: Thought possible.

373

00:44:21.000 --> 00:44:37.680

Jennifer Fleischner: Given the way my memory is, but, and my complete mission to make it still is, you know, I'm incredibly delighted that she's had the recognition- she's had an obituary in the New York Times.

374

00:44:38.850 --> 00:44:40.080

Jennifer Fleischner: A couple years ago.

375

00:44:42.450 --> 00:44:55.860

Jennifer Fleischner: Historical markers with her name spelled correctly, you know, just all sorts of recognitions- the PR, and I am very proud of that, had to have- having it had a hand in some of that.

376

00:44:57.840 --> 00:45:01.980

Jennifer Fleischner: But I would love more work to be done.

377

00:45:05.460 --> 00:45:09.240

Jennifer Fleischner: That would require, you know, that requires you know the archival work.

378

00:45:09.720 --> 00:45:10.410

Jennifer Fleischner: Also.

379

00:45:10.590 --> 00:45:13.740

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, there's got to be one out there.

380

00:45:17.040 --> 00:45:21.000

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, so, but- yeah, the pushback I got was.

381

00:45:22.710 --> 00:45:30.630

Jennifer Fleischner: Particularly not so much about the Keckly book, but the one I wrote before. The one particularly about speaking about trauma and child abuse and.

382

00:45:32.160 --> 00:45:32.760

Selah DeGering: How dare you.

383

00:45:33.330 --> 00:45:34.440

Jennifer Fleischner: About mixed race.

384

00:45:34.920 --> 00:45:35.610

Jennifer

Fleischner:[unintelligible]

385

00:45:36.600 --> 00:45:49.410

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, slave- slave women who wrote about having a white mother and a black mother, two mothers in my family, black and white, I sort of weighed all- all that.

386

00:45:49.860 --> 00:45:51.960

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, at that time, and that was.

387

00:45:54.960 --> 00:46:01.560

Jennifer Fleischner: New territory and particularly, again, being a white more than, say.

388

00:46:02.610 --> 00:46:03.270

Jennifer Fleischner: You know.

389

00:46:05.460 --> 00:46:06.780

Jennifer Fleischner: I think that was.

390

00:46:08.100 --> 00:46:18.480

Jennifer Fleischner: That's where the pushback came, not- no- more, I mean, I come from, you know, much younger people certainly, and rightly so, so, you.

391

00:46:19.710 --> 00:46:25.350

Jennifer Fleischner: Have many different ways of approaching this from how I did, you know, again, that many years ago.

392

00:46:28.680 --> 00:46:30.240

Selah DeGering: I was just, um.

393

00:46:32.430 --> 00:46:33.210

Selah DeGering: Oh.

394

00:46:34.890 --> 00:46:35.460

Selah DeGering: Let's see.

395

00:46:38.160 --> 00:46:50.460

Selah DeGering: So part of my thesis is about [unintelligible], okay, so I have the musical portion and I also have the written portion where it's- where i'm talking about.



396

00:46:51.570 --> 00:46:58.470

Selah DeGering: You know, my research, and my methodology, how I went about writing this, who I talked to, etc.

397

00:47:02.670 --> 00:47:03.840

Selah DeGering: Where is this book.

398

00:47:09.540 --> 00:47:15.660

Selah DeGering: Anyways, you've just given me so many book recommendations, I wanted to give you one, but I can't find it on the Internet.

399

00:47:16.770 --> 00:47:17.730

Jennifer Fleischner: You can email me.

400

00:47:18.120 --> 00:47:26.430

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, one of the things that I think would be interesting, perhaps, maybe not, you know, Keckly's sense of her.

401

00:47:27.630 --> 00:47:39.900

Jennifer Fleischner: Multiple, you know, multiple racial origins or origin, so, you know, white black, native, certainly, indigenous- you can see it in her face, I mean.

402

00:47:41.550 --> 00:47:55.320

Jennifer Fleischner: How she actually navigated that, you know the connections to her half sisters, you know, visiting and back afterwards, I mean, that was not uncommon, that- the trip back.

403

00:47:57.240 --> 00:48:05.640

Jennifer Fleischner: You could see others do it, but, but, that would be sort of interesting to explore. She- she's very aware of her son's.

404

00:48:06.720 --> 00:48:08.610

Jennifer Fleischner: You know, whiteness.

405

00:48:10.110 --> 00:48:14.190

Jennifer Fleischner: He, I think, as the next generation.

406

00:48:15.840 --> 00:48:16.860

Jennifer Fleischner: Had he lived.

407

00:48:18.480 --> 00:48:24.000

Jennifer Fleischner: It would have been interesting to see what kind of path he chose, you know.

408

00:48:26.010 --> 00:48:28.860

Jennifer Fleischner: He took- used the name Kirkland.

409

00:48:29.400 --> 00:48:32.190

Selah DeGering: He takes up a good portion of the first act, so.

410

00:48:32.640 --> 00:48:35.760

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, I mean all of that, it's really interesting and worth.

411

00:48:35.760 --> 00:48:37.290

Jennifer Fleischner: Exploring I think.

412

00:48:41.400 --> 00:48:42.090

Jennifer Fleischner: Not sure.

413

00:48:42.120 --> 00:48:47.310

Selah DeGering: Yeah, so I'm black, white, and Native American as well.

414

00:48:48.660 --> 00:48:52.260

Selah DeGering: So, you know, and I- like I said, I grew up in a white household.

415

00:48:52.380 --> 00:48:54.570

Selah DeGering: Right, and a white neighborhood.

416

00:48:55.380 --> 00:48:58.260

Selah DeGering: And, and it was just a lot of.

417

00:49:00.600 --> 00:49:01.230

Selah DeGering: um.

418

00:49:02.820 --> 00:49:15.600

Selah DeGering: Well, I mean I would have, and still do have, you know, strangers hold open the door for me, I had someone, like, look me in the face, who, who was white and and asked me "What are you?"

419

00:49:18.810 --> 00:49:31.950

Selah DeGering: Or, you know, have had people approach me or introduce themselves to me and then, like, stopped mid introduction and go, "By the way, if you don't mind my asking, like, what's your identity, you know, where do you come from?"

420

00:49:33.090 --> 00:49:33.510

Selah DeGering: And

421

00:49:36.510 --> 00:49:42.900

Selah DeGering: It gets tricky, really uncomfortable, but at this point I just kind of go "You tell me. Guess."

422

00:49:45.210 --> 00:49:47.370

Selah DeGering: And then they get uncomfortable and it's a very fun game.

423

00:49:49.530 --> 00:49:51.330

Jennifer Fleischner: I mean, I would love to.

424

00:49:51.450 --> 00:49:56.220

Jennifer Fleischner: See some research done on that somewhere [unintelligible].

425

00:49:56.610 --> 00:50:01.620

Selah DeGering: So I did find the book, it's called "Beyond Black: Racial Identity in America."

426

00:50:03.540 --> 00:50:13.350

Selah DeGering: By Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David L. Brunsma.

427

00:50:14.310 --> 00:50:14.730

Selah DeGering: I.

428

00:50:14.970 --> 00:50:16.950

Jennifer Fleischner: [unintelligible] send me an email, I mean, I.

429

00:50:18.690 --> 00:50:20.670

Jennifer Fleischner: Mean, it's probably better, yeah.

430

00:50:20.730 --> 00:50:21.690

Selah DeGering: I could send it to you.

431

00:50:22.980 --> 00:50:25.290

Selah DeGering: But yeah, that was among.

432

00:50:25.380 --> 00:50:33.420

Selah DeGering: the great stuff that I read because I've read a lot of studies, a lot of studies on.

433

00:50:35.070 --> 00:50:39.120

Selah DeGering: Race Relations. I read a study about- I'm.

434

00:50:43.230 --> 00:50:44.820

Selah DeGering: Sorry, my children are crying.

435

00:50:46.830 --> 00:50:50.970

Selah DeGering: Now, so- they're now crying so, my- my mind is "whoo."

436

00:50:51.000 --> 00:50:52.020

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, yeah.

437

00:50:52.590 --> 00:50:58.500

Selah DeGering: I read a study about doctors in the medical field.

438

00:50:59.100 --> 00:51:01.770

Selah DeGering: And about, like, the average American populace.

439

00:51:03.450 --> 00:51:19.170

Selah DeGering: Wherein they surveyed Americans at varying degrees of- with varying degrees of medical training and they asked them about pain

tolerance.

440

00:51:20.970 --> 00:51:23.040

Selah DeGering: And they found that.

441

00:51:24.180 --> 00:51:42.180

Selah DeGering: Overwhelmingly, the average American perception of people with and without medical training, I'll find that quote: "the white body"- no. "The black body is stronger than the white body."

442

00:51:45.960 --> 00:51:49.380

Selah DeGering: And you know I've also experienced that going into.

443

00:51:50.670 --> 00:51:51.660



Selah DeGering: The emergency room.

444

00:51:53.250 --> 00:52:06.150

Selah DeGering: And having no record of pain medication abuse, no record of actively going into doctors offices complaining of pain, like, no- no record to suggest that I was lying.

445

00:52:07.620 --> 00:52:11.250

Selah DeGering: And been treated as though.

446

00:52:12.720 --> 00:52:33.600

Selah DeGering: They thought I was there for drugs. Just outright, um, and that was horrific and very traumatizing for me, but you know, I took that experience and I went, like, "Wait a minute, does that translate into how we talk about.

447

00:52:34.740 --> 00:52:39.450

Selah DeGering: Black people? Does that translate into how we see black people? Probably!

448

00:52:41.400 --> 00:52:57.570

Selah DeGering: Um, where does that come from?" And you know, so I started reading slave narratives and I started digging back into, "Where does this come from, what, what, what is this nonsense that we see in our modern medical system?"

449

00:52:58.620 --> 00:53:01.590

Selah DeGering: You know, and, "How does that apply to.

450

00:53:02.610 --> 00:53:12.300

Selah DeGering: Other stereotypes and other ways that we-  
other ways that white society, as it were, has.

451

00:53:13.710 --> 00:53:17.400

Selah DeGering: You know, how to deal with black society.

452

00:53:17.910 --> 00:53:18.390

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah.

453

00:53:19.500 --> 00:53:23.070

Jennifer Fleischner: So maybe- I actually had a student  
coming in 11, she's.

454

00:53:23.310 --> 00:53:30.600

Jennifer Fleischner: Okay, [unintelligible] but that's it  
that's really interesting and important.

455

00:53:32.040 --> 00:53:36.000

Jennifer Fleischner: Yeah, you know, while you were talking-  
stop the recording.

# Music Sample

Avery DeGering

In That Day

Amy Loertscher

$\text{♩} = 100$  *mf*

Elizabeth

A life-time of ro-mance and sor - ow, of

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Piano

B♭ Bass Clarinet

Violoncello

Concert Snare Drum

4

Elizabeth

day-dreams, of real-zed tom-or - rows. A life-time, a

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B♭ B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

7 *Freely, expressively*

Elizabeth

hund - red years, a hund - red wars, a

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 3, measures 7 and 8. The score is written for a vocal soloist named Elizabeth and several instrumental ensembles. Elizabeth's part is in a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major). Her melody for measure 7 is marked 'Freely, expressively' and includes the lyrics 'hund - red years, a hund - red wars, a'. The instrumental parts for the Black Ensemble, White Ensemble, Piano, Violoncello, and Conga/Snare are mostly rests in both measures. The B-flat Bass Clarinet part has a sustained note in measure 7. The page number '3' is in the top right corner.

Elizabeth

8

3

hund-red tears, a hund-red peo - ple, hun-dreds of peo-ple,

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

Detailed description: This is a page from a musical score, page 4. It features a vocal line for Elizabeth and instrumental parts for a Black Ensemble, White Ensemble, Piano (Pno.), B-flat Bass Clarinet (B $\flat$  B. Cl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Conga/Snare (Con. Sn.). Elizabeth's part is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It begins with a measure containing a whole note with a fermata, marked with an '8' above it. The lyrics 'hund-red tears, a hund-red peo - ple,' are written below this measure. The second measure of Elizabeth's part contains a triplet of eighth notes, marked with a '3' above it, with the lyrics 'hun-dreds of peo-ple,' below it. The instrumental parts for the Black Ensemble, White Ensemble, Pno., Vc., and Con. Sn. are all in the same key signature and are mostly silent, indicated by horizontal lines with bar lines. The B $\flat$  B. Cl. part has a single eighth note in the first measure, followed by a whole rest in the second measure.

10 *rit.* 3 3 **a tempo**

Elizabeth

hund-reds of thou-sands of peo - ple, in that day.

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno. **a tempo**

B $\flat$  B. Cl. *rit.* **a tempo**  
Ω

Vc.

Con. Sn.



12

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

In that day,

In that day,

In that day, there were

In that day, there were

Elizabeth: Treble clef, D major key signature. Measure 12: whole rest. Measure 13: whole rest.

Black Ensemble: Treble and Bass clefs, D major key signature. Measure 12: Treble (quarter rest, quarter note G4, quarter note A4), Bass (quarter rest, quarter note G2, quarter note A2). Measure 13: Treble (half note G4), Bass (half note G2).

White Ensemble: Treble and Bass clefs, D major key signature. Measure 12: Treble (quarter rest, quarter note G4, quarter note A4), Bass (quarter rest, quarter note G2, quarter note A2). Measure 13: Treble (quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5), Bass (quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3).

Pno.: Treble and Bass clefs, D major key signature. Measure 12: Treble (whole rest), Bass (quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3). Measure 13: Treble (quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5), Bass (quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2, quarter note C3).

B $\flat$  B. Cl.: Treble clef, D major key signature. Measure 12: quarter rest, quarter note G4, quarter note A4. Measure 13: half note G4, quarter rest, quarter note G4.

Vc.: Bass clef, D major key signature. Measure 12: whole rest. Measure 13: whole rest.

Con. Sn.: Percussion line. Measure 12: whole rest. Measure 13: whole rest.

14

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

In that day,

hors-es and bug - gies, in that day, there were

hors-es and bug - gies, in that day, there were

16

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

In that day,

gal - as and balls. In that day, there was

gal - as and balls. In that day, there was

The musical score for page 8, measures 16-17, is written for a large ensemble. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The score includes parts for Elizabeth, Black Ensemble, White Ensemble, Piano, B-flat Bass Clarinet, Violoncello, and Conga/Snare. Elizabeth has a whole rest. The Black Ensemble has a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. The White Ensemble has a melody starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. The Piano has a chordal accompaniment. The B-flat Bass Clarinet has a melody starting on G3, moving to A3, B3, and C4. The Violoncello and Conga/Snare have whole rests.

18

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

In that day,

hon-or and glo - ry, in that day, there were

hon-or and glo - ry, in that day, there were

20

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B♭ B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

*f*  
In that

*f*  
In that

sum-mers and falls.  
*f*  
In that

sum-mers and falls.  
*f*  
In that

*f*

*f*

22

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

day, there was trade on th'at-lan-lan-tic, in that

day, there was trade on th'at-lan-lan-tic, in that

day, In that

day, In that

3

24

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

day, there were cries of th'a - bused. In that

day, there were cries of th'a - bused. In that

day, In that

day, In that

3

26

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

day there was ser-mon on Sun - days, in that

day there was ser-mon on Sun - days, in that

day In that

day In that

3

3



28

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

day, there were p'lice in the pews. In that

day, there were p'lice in the pews. In that

day, In that

day, In that

The musical score is written for a large ensemble. It begins at measure 28. Elizabeth has a whole rest in both measures. The Black Ensemble and White Ensemble are divided into four parts each (two staves per group). They sing the lyrics 'day, there were p'lice in the pews. In that'. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The B-flat Bass Clarinet, Violoncello, and Conga/Snare parts have whole rests throughout the two measures.

30

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

day, the ne-groes were ri - sing, in that

day, the ne-groes were ri - sing, in that

day, In that

day, In that

32

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

day, their chains were hard-fast! *ff* In that

day, their chains were hard-fast! *ff* In that

day, In that

day, In that

*ff*

*ff*

34

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B♭ B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

*mf* day In that

*mf* day In that

*mf* day the mas-ters were kin - der, in that

*mf* day the mas-ters were kin - der, in that

*mf*

The musical score is for page 17, rehearsal mark 34. It features several parts: Elizabeth, Black Ensemble, White Ensemble, Piano (Pno.), B♭ B. Clarinet (B♭ B. Cl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Conga/Snare (Con. Sn.). Elizabeth and the Black Ensemble sing 'day' and 'In that'. The White Ensemble sings 'day the mas-ters were kin - der, in that'. The Piano provides accompaniment. The B♭ B. Clarinet, Violoncello, and Conga/Snare are also present.



39

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

Free - dom

Free - dom

Free - dom

Free - dom



43

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B♭ B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

won. *mf* Free - dom

won. *mf* Free - dom,

won. *mf* Free - dom

won. *mf* Free - dom

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*





[illegible]

49

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

blood stained the soil, moth-ers and daugh-daugh-ters,

blood stained the soil,

blood stained the soil, ,

[illegible]

53

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

3 wailed from the dit-ches! ches! The an-ces-tors

3 wailed from the dit - ches, an-ces-tors

wailed from dit - ches, an - ces - tors, they

3 wailed from the dit - ches, an-ces-tors

wailed from dit - ches, an - ces - tors, they

55

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

screamed from the mud! And from that day of

From that day of

screamed from mud! From that day of

screamed from the mud!

240

57

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

bon - dage and vio - lence,

bon - dage and vio - vio - lence,

From that

58

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B♭ B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

From that day of

day of

From that day of

The musical score for page 29, rehearsal mark 58, features the following parts:

- Elizabeth:** A single staff with a whole rest.
- Black Ensemble:** A four-staff section (two treble and two bass clefs) with whole rests.
- White Ensemble:** A four-staff section with lyrics. The lyrics are "From that day of" on the first two staves and "day of" on the third and fourth staves.
- Pno. (Piano):** A two-staff section with a rhythmic accompaniment.
- B♭ B. Cl. (B♭ Bass Clarinet):** A single staff with a melodic line.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** A single staff with a whole note.
- Con. Sn. (Conga/Snare):** A single staff with a rhythmic pattern.





61

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

right - eous con - ten - tion, came a

right - eous con - ten - tion, came a

right - eous con - ten - tion, came a

right - eous con - ten - tion, came a

The musical score is for page 31, rehearsal mark 61. It features several parts: Elizabeth (soprano), Black Ensemble (SATB), White Ensemble (SATB), Piano (Pno.), B-flat Bass Clarinet (B $\flat$  B. Cl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Conga Snare (Con. Sn.). The vocal parts have the lyrics 'right - eous con - ten - tion, came a'. The piano part has a simple harmonic accompaniment. The B-flat Bass Clarinet, Violoncello, and Conga Snare parts have specific rhythmic patterns.

62

Elizabeth

voice to tell it all... E -

Black Ensemble

voice, came a voice, voice, a voice, voice, came a voice, to tell it all... E -

White Ensemble

voice to tell it all... E -

voice, came a voice, voice, a voice, voice, came a voice, to tell it all... E -

Pno.

*p*

B♭ B. Cl.

*p*

Vc.

*p*

Con. Sn.

*p*

64

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

liz-a-beth... E - liz-a-beth Keck-ley, E - liz-a-beth,

liz-a-beth... E - liz-a-beth Keck-ley, E - liz-a-beth,

liz-a-beth... E - liz-a-beth Keck-ley, E - liz-a-beth,

mp

mp

mp



69

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B $\flat$  B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

good for noth-ing turn - coat, E - liz-abeth, lied bef - ore

Ooo - - - - Ooo

Ooo - - - - Ooo

good for noth-ing turn - coat, E - liz-abeth, lied bef - ore

Ooo - - - - Ooo

Ooo - - - - Ooo

72

Elizabeth

Black Ensemble

White Ensemble

Pno.

B♭ B. Cl.

Vc.

Con. Sn.

*p* God...

Free - dom, hard to be won, hard to be won.

*p* Free - dom, hard to be won, hard to be won.

*p* God...

Free - dom, hard to be won, hard to be won.

*p* Free - dom, hard to be won, hard to be won.

*p*

*p*

[illegible]