

## PROLOGUE

(Setting is “*Bower of Mulberry Trees*”. The two Singer/Angels ring the bell as the lights come up.)

EVA

My name is Eva Ann Stanton. I come here in the year 1837. I didn't really have no where else to go. But that warn't the reason I come here. I come here and stayed here 'cause they was kind to me. And they was the first that ever was. My name is Eva Ann Stanton. This here's a story. All in all, it ain't nothing much.

(She starts whirling. Male Singer/Angel begins "HOLY ORDER SONG". Voices join in and throughout the following dialogue the song builds.)

ISAAC

Issac Barton here. My gift is to walk. I walked 38,000 miles in a ten year span of time. I've walked some since then too. Walking the gospel. Walking the gospel light. (Isaac joins song.)

(We see George Pierson. He is drunk. He crosses the stage, weaving his way through the other actors. They do not see him.)

CLARA

Luxurious living with a mind that's oppressed—with my disposition I much prefer death. Clara O'Connor's my name. They took me in at age 7 and I left for freedom in my 48<sup>th</sup> year with \$10 in my pocket and God's love in my heart. Liberty was what I longed for all the days of my life there. And it was for that one precious boon that I left them!! Freedom!!

ANNIE

I learned to work.

CLARA

Praise God!! Freedom!! (She begins whirling. She joins song.)

(Female Singer/Angel joins song.)

ANNIE

I learned it was better to soil my hands than my character. (She begins to whirl.)

AURELIA

O, that the fishes of the sea and all the fowl of the air, and all things that have life and breath, yea all the trees of the forest and grass of the fields would pray to God for me! (She begins to whirl and joins song.)

JAMES

There will be a famine, not of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of the word of God; and you will be glad to pick up every scrap and every crumb that ever fell from our mouths. People will yet see the time when they will be willing to crawl on their hands and knees to the ends of the earth to hear the word of the Lord. (He joins song.)

ANNIE

(Stops whirling) I learned to eat quick, talk quick, hear quick and work quick for I was quickened!

CALVIN

I was born here. My mother joined the community before I was born and after my birth signed the covenant.

ANNIE

Hands to work.

CALVIN

My life has been rich in . . . . .

ANNIE

Hearts . . . . .

JAMES

There will be famine.

ANNIE

hearts to God.

AURELIA

Pray to God for me!

CALVIN

I among men

JAMES

Hear the word of the Lord!

CALVIN

am . . .

ISAAC

Walking the gospel light.

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CLARA  
Freedom!

(George exits. Male Singer/Angel drops a scroll filled with spirit writing.  
Music ceases. Women continue to whirl in silence. James is the only one  
who sees the scroll.)

JAMES  
I hear the word of the Lord!

(Eva screams and falls to the ground. Isaac, Clara, Aurelia and James  
exit.)

## **ACT ONE**

CALVIN  
(Calvin sees Eva. Calling off.) Sisters! . . . . Sisters! . . . . Miss . . . . Sisters . .  
.May I . . . . May I help?

EVA  
Where?

CALVIN  
I'm right here. Would you like water?

EVA  
Where?

CALVIN  
From the crick. (Calling off.) Sisters!!

EVA  
Where?

CALVIN  
Water.

EVA  
Water?

CALVIN  
Water.

EVA  
Where?

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CALVIN  
I'll get you water. Rest . . .

EVA  
Where?

CALVIN  
There.

EVA  
There.

CALVIN  
There.

(She crawls to the spot he indicates. He goes toward stream to get water. She puts weight on one foot. Screams. He spills water on himself.)

EVA  
(Reaches spot.) There.

CALVIN  
Where?

(She looks at him.)

CALVIN  
Water. I'm getting you water.

(Gets water. Brings it to her. She drinks.)

CALVIN  
Are you lost?

(She give him empty cup. Wants more. He gets more.)

CALVIN  
If you're lost, I can perhaps help you find your way to—to your home. It's a lovely day for a walk isn't it? Lilacs. Lovely. Lovely. Have you been walking a while?

(He hands her the water. She drinks.)

CALVIN  
I'm on a berrying expedition myself. Can't think where the others have got to. May I . . . . .

EVA  
Where?

(She drinks.)

CALVIN  
Oh. Just over the ridge perhaps. You never know. Those sisters can scatter faster than (Catches self—laughs.) More water?

EVA  
Where?

(He gets more water.)

CALVIN  
If you know where you are going, perhaps I can help you. Such a lovely day to be lost. It can't turn out badly. I was saying to myself this morning, Calvin, it's a beautiful day, Mother's beautiful day, it's meant to be enjoyed—take the sisters berrying. (He hands her water.) So I spoke to Sister Aurelia about it. She is always for work you know. Work, work, work. Glory Mother in work. But even her spirits were affected by the spring air . . . . .

(Eva gags on water. Throws up.)

CALVIN  
There, there, well now, well now, perhaps we'd better get you to the village, don't you think? Have you looked after, don't you think?

(He puts hand on her in an attempt to comfort her. Eva moans and tries to escape. Can't walk. Falls.)

CALVIN  
I mean you no harm. Truly. I mean you no harm. I want to help.

(He approaches her. She whimpers—tries to move away.)

CALVIN  
Please. We have a home just beyond the ridge. We will help you. Please. Let us help you.

(Eva faints.)

CALVIN  
Let us help.

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(Male Singer/Angel starts—"I HAVE A SOUL TO BE SAVED OR LOST".  
During song Brother Calvin picks Eva up and carries her into dining room  
area.)

MALE SINGER/ANGEL:

I have a soul to be saved or lost  
And if I would ever save it,  
I must be faithful to bear my cross,  
And be true unto God who gave it.

FEMALE SINGER/ANGEL JOINS:

For if my holy birthright I should sell,  
To feed on carnal pleasure,  
My soul would surely sink in hell,  
And in sorrow without measure.

(As Calvin walks, other Shakers see him and stop working to help him—  
one out of barn, etc. Except for Aurelia and James, men speak only to  
men, women speak only to women.)