

Scenes from “The Innocent for the Guilty”
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Act I
Scene 1

Setting: A western town, towards evening.

The scene opens with the townspeople (the choir and a few children) frozen in place about the town (during the overture). The town comes alive with people going about the town shopping, greeting one another, etc. as they sing “Travelin’ Down the Trail.” (If preferred, the townspeople can come down the aisles and through the audience during the first verse of the song; they would be on stage during the second verse only.) The townspeople exit during the end of the song, except for the Mrs. Whitaker and her children who go to the counter in Pop’s store with a basket of items. Immediately after the song, the sound of a wagon and horses is heard outside the store. Troy can be seen through the window as he glances at the “Help Wanted” sign, then enters the store and stands in the corner by the window until Mrs. Whitaker exits. He should seem very nervous. Pop is behind the counter speaking to Mrs. Whitaker.

Pop: *(going through the items and writing down some figures on a piece of paper)* Catchin’ up on your groceries, I see. That’ll be three dollars and fifty cents, Mrs. Whitaker.

Mrs. Whitaker: Three dollars and fifty cents! *(smiling at him good-naturedly)* You’re a bandit Pop! If I weren’t so fond of you and Mom, I’d turn ya over to the sheriff for sure! *(pays Pop and takes her basket)* Come along, children. *(to Pop)* Say “Hi” to Mom for me.

Pop: Will do. *(noticing Troy)* There somethin’ ya be needin’, boy?

Troy: *(stammering some)* Ah, well, I, ah, yes, sir. *(looks about him nervously)*

Pop: *(eyeing him somewhat suspiciously)* Well?

Troy: *(taking a deep breath)* I—saw your sign in the window.

Pop: And what sign would that be?

Troy: The one that said you needed help.

Pop: *(coming out from behind the counter and looking Troy over carefully. Troy lowers his eyes, very self-conscious about his shabby appearance.)* You, ah—you figure yer the one ta give it to me, do ya?

Troy: I—I need it, sir.

Pop: *(snorting)* Well, from the looks of ya, I'd say ya do. *(looking Troy straight in the eyes)* I don't recollect ever seein' ya around these here parts before.

Troy: You ain't, sir. Me and my family just come to town today.

Pop: Ya look a might young ta be havin' a family.

Troy: I'm eighteen, sir, but I ain't married, if that's what you mean. I got my Ma and my sister.

Pop: No Pa?

Troy: *(shifting his eyes to the floor and swallowing hard)* No. No sir.

Pop: And how am I to be a-knowin' that I can trust ya, boy?

Troy: I—I guess you don't, sir. But if you'll just give me a chance, I'll prove it to you. I'm a hard worker, sir. I take orders real good, and—and I don't complain none.

Pop: Hmph! Seems to be a boy o' yer talents, if he was a-tellin' the truth, *(arching one eyebrow as he looks Troy directly in the eyes)* wouldn't be so hard up fer a job!. *(pauses a moment, looks outside at the street, then turns back to Troy)*
That yer family out there in that wagon?

Troy: Yes, sir.

Pop: Well, I reckon ya best not keep them waitin'!

Troy: *(sighs, pauses a moment, looks dejected, starts to leave, looks back, speaks in a whisper)* I'm sorry I troubled you, sir.

Pop: Hymph! Seems to me a boy what's jest got hisself a job would be a might bit happier than that!

Troy: What—what did you say, sir?

Pop: You heard me. Now if'n yer aimin' ta please, boy, you'd best be fetchin' that thar family o' yers and take 'em upstairs (*nods his head towards the steps*) I got a place fer my help. Ain't much, but I reckon it's a heap better 'en that old wagon. Well stop yer gawkin', boy, and get on with it, afore I change my mind!

Troy: Y—yes, sir. Yes, sir! (*runs out the door*) Mama, I got it! I got the job! We've even got a place to stay!

Mary: Praise the Lord! I knew God wouldn't let us down!

(Mary, Troy, and Angie enter the store from the street. Mary is holding a blanket. Angie is clutching a doll. Troy has a ragged suitcase in hand.)

Mary: I'm obliged to you, Mr.—I

Pop: Williams, Ma'am. Luke Williams. (*shakes her hand*) Folks around here jest call me Pop.

Mary: Mr. Williams—Pop. I'm grateful to you for giving Troy this job.

Angie: Does this mean we finally get to eat, Mama?

Mary: (*glancing at her with a look that says, "Keep quiet."*) Angie—

Angie: Well I'm starvin'!

Troy: You heard your Mama. (*Mary looks away, embarrassed*)

Mary: (*after an awkward silence, trying to change the subject*) We weren't expectin' a place to live right off. It's real nice of you to—

Pop: (*shrugging it off*) Goes with the job, Mrs.—

Mary: Please, (*pauses slightly*) just call me Mary.

Pop: All right. (*looks at Angie, concern in his eyes*) First meal comes with it, too.

Troy: Sir, you don't need to—

Pop: (*cutting him off*) Now ya told me ya took orders real good, boy.

Troy: Yes, sir.

Pop: Well, that's an order. Mom and me will be expectin' ya in about an hour. We live over yonder. (*nods towards the door under the steps*) Jest knock on the door after yer settled in.

Troy: Yes, sir, we will. *(Mary and Angie start towards the steps. Pop offers Angie a piece of candy from a canister on the counter. Troy shakes Pop's hand.)* Thank you, sir. I promise you; you won't be disappointed.

Pop: *(quietly)* I hope not.

Mary: *(Pop exits through the door. Lights go down on the store and up on the upper room. Troy goes up the stairs; Mary and Angie should already be there. Mary places the blanket at the foot of the bed. Angie sits in the rocker and begins playing with her doll.)*

Troy: *(setting the suitcase on the floor by the fireplace)* I'll bring the rest in from the wagon, Mama. You and Angie can start putting things where you'd like them. *(Troy starts to leave.)*

Mary: *(putting her hand on his arm to stop him)* Troy, before we do another thing, we need to thank the Lord for all He's done for us. He's answered our prayers above and beyond what we had asked!

Troy: *(hesitates a moment, then shakes his head in agreement)*

Mary: I know it's been hard for you to trust Him lately, Troy, but God has a plan in everything that's happened. *(putting her hand reassuringly on his arm)* He's going to work this out, son.

Troy: *(puts his head down, breathes heavily)* I hope you're right, Mama. *(Troy sits on the stairs. Mary removes her bonnet and shawl during the song. She and Troy should interact according to the words of the song, as if speaking to one another.)*

Song: Trust in the Lord

(Lights Down)

End Scene

Act I
Scene 2

(Lights up dimly on the upper room)

Setting: Later that night in the upper room. Angie is in bed. Mary is sitting in the rocker mending her shawl. Troy is on the top stair reading from a small Bible.

Angie: *(suddenly sitting up in bed)* Mama, Mama!

Mary: *(going quickly to her side)* Shh, dear, Mama's right here.

Angie: Don't let them hurt Troy, Mama! Don't let them hurt him!

Mary: *(stroking Angie's forehead)* Shh, It's all right, Angie. No one's going to hurt your brother.

Troy: *(crosses to Mary and Angie)* What's wrong with her?

Mary: She's burnin' up with fever. I think she's delirious.

Angie: They're comin', Mama! They're comin'!

Troy: *(nervously)* If we can't keep her quiet we'll have the whole town down on us.

Mary: Take that bucket over there, Troy. *(points to a bucket by the fireplace)* Go outside and see if you can find the town well. Maybe some cool water will help.

Troy: What she needs is a doctor.

Mary: I know—but we don't have the money to pay for one.

Troy: Besides, he'll find out—

Mary: Oh, Troy—

Troy: I'm innocent, Mama. Why should I have to—

Mary: You know why. If Rod finds you— *(She stops abruptly, having difficulty controlling her emotions.)* It's all my fault. If I'd listened to my mother when I was young and not married your— She could see right through your Pa. If only I'd married someone who— *(Troy hangs his head. Mary looks up and speaks gently.)* I'm sorry, Troy.

Troy: I'll—I'll get the water. (*grabs the bucket, starts down the stairs into the store*)

Angie: Mama, tell them Troy didn't do it! Tell them, Mama!

Mary: (*kneels beside the bed, tries to comfort Angie and keep her quiet; speaks softly*) Don't you worry, darlin', I will. I will. (*Pop enters from his "home" [the back door under the stairs] just as Troy is walking by.*)

Pop: I heard some sort o' commotion goin' on, boy. Everythin' all right?

Troy: My ah—my little sister's sick with fever, sir.

Pop: Let me take a look at 'er. (*goes up the stairs,- looks in at Mary and Angie. Troy follows him. Pop speaks to Troy.*) Ya goin' ta fetch the doc?

Troy: I ah—no. No, sir. I was goin' to find some cool water.

Pop: (*feels Angie's forehead.*) She needs a doctor, son. I'll go get him for you.

Troy: (*putting his hand on Pop's arm to stop him*) We can't pay him, sir.

Pop: Never mind that. She's a-needin' a doctor. I'm sure I'll be able to spare ya some ta go do some chores fer him after 'while. I know the Doc pretty well. He'll be considerin' that ta be plenty enough pay. You go fetch that water, boy—down the end of the street there. (*motions with his head to the left, towards the hotel*)

(*to Mary*) I'll go get Mom to stay with ya till we git back, Ma'am.

Mary: (*a little too quickly*) Oh, that won't be necessary, thank you. There's no need to wake her. We'll be fine.

Pop: Well. All right, if'n ya say so, but if ya should decide ya need 'er, you jest holler real loud.

Mary: Thank you. (*Pop goes down the stairs and exits out the front door of the store. Troy looks at his mother, worried.*)

Troy: (*in a stage whisper*) We'd better start prayin' that Angie keeps quiet while that doctor's here. (*Troy walks down the stairs towards the hotel.*)

(*Lights down*)

End Scene

Act I
Scene 3

(Lights up on the store)

Setting: The next morning, inside Pop's store. The shade needs to be down. Troy is sweeping the floor. Pop enters from the side room, crosses to Troy.

Pop: Well now, that's what I like to be a-seein', a boy with ambition!

Troy: *(smiling)* Good morning, sir.

Pop: And good mornin' to you. That sister of yers, she feelin' better this mornin', is she?

Troy: Yes, sir. Praise the Lord.

Pop: *(looking at him rather skeptically because of his statement about the Lord)* Good. Good. Guess we wouldn't o' needed old doc after all last night, what with her fever a-breakin' afore he even got there.

Troy: *(thinking about how close they came to Pop and Doc hearing what Angie was saying during her delirium.)* We prayed that it would.

Pop: I noticed you folks prayed afore ya ate last night, too. Yer pretty religious, ain't ya—you and yer kinfolk.

Troy: Well, sir, I don't know if I'd call it religious. We know the Lord, if that's what you mean.

Pop: Yeah, that's what I'm a-meanin'. And that's a good thing, boy. Don't git me wrong. It's a good thing fer some folks, but me and Mom are happy jest the way we are, if'n ya knows what I mean?

Troy: Sir?

Pop: In other words, yer ta keep yer religion to yerself. I don't want ya pushin' yer beliefs on us or my customers. It's not good fer business. You understand what I'm sayin', boy?

Troy: *(slowly, almost sadly)* Yes, sir. I think I do.

Pop: Good. We'll git along jest fine. *(Mrs. Tucker walks through the door; Pop greets her.)*
Mornin' Mrs. Tucker!

Mrs. Tucker: *(jovially)* Good morning, Pop! It's a beautiful day today. The sun is shining.

You really ought to pull up that shade, Pop, and let some of that light into this store. It's hard to see what you've got!

Mom: *(entering from the side room)* You're right. I'm always gittin' on him about that, too. He always forgets! *(Mom starts to raise the shade. Seeing Toby Jenson heading towards the store, she lowers it quickly.)*

(to Pop) Oh, no. Here comes Toby. It sure enough didn't take him long!
(crosses to Troy; warning him) Toby Jenson's comin', boy.

Troy: *(puzzled, as if wondering if the name is supposed to mean something to him.)* Toby Jenson?

Mom: Yep, he's the town's busybody. No doubt he heard 'bout you already. He's gonna have a heap of questions fer ya, *(She motions for Troy to go to the farthest end of the store, away from Toby. Pop goes behind the counter and busies himself)*

Toby: *(enters the store)* Mornin', Pop. Mornin' Mom. I had just a few minutes to spare and thought I'd come visit with you for a spell.

Mom: *(assuming he came to pry)* Any special reason, Toby?

Toby: *(straining his neck to try and find Troy)* Nothin' in particular. Just wonderin'—

Pop: *(knowing why Toby really came)* He'd be over yonder by the pickle barrel, Toby. *(Toby tips his hat in thanks to Pop.)*

Mom: And just in case you'd like to know, he's got work to do.

Toby: *(nonchalantly)* I'm sure he does. *(Toby doesn't waste a minute and heads directly to Troy. Mrs. Tucker, Mom, and Pop exchange looks of "Here he goes again!" They should busy themselves about the store during Toby's and Troy's dialogue.)*

Toby: Howdy, young fellow!

Troy: *(still sweeping, speaks nervously)* Sir.

Toby: The name's Toby, Toby Jenson. *(Toby extends his hand, which Troy shakes. There is a moment of awkward silence.)*

And your name would be—?

Troy: Oh, sorry, sir. It's Troy.

Toby: Troy what?

Troy: *(freezing momentarily, hesitant to give his name)*

Toby: You do have a last name don't you, boy?

Troy: Yes, sir. Of course, its, ah—Daniels, sir. Troy Daniels.

Toby: Daniels, Daniels. Name sounds familiar, but I don't recollect no Daniels in these parts. Where ya come from?

Troy: Over Tucson way, sir.

Toby: Tucson. Long trip. *(fingers his chin as if thinking through the information he has discovered; clears his throat)* I hear it's just you, your Ma, and your sister.

Troy: Yes, sir. If you'll excuse me, I think Pop has something for me to do. *(starts to cross towards Pop. Toby grabs his arm.)*

Toby: Pop's a patient man. He'll wait.
You got no Pa, boy?

Troy: *(very nervously)* Ah, no sir, not—not with us.

Toby: Dead, is he?

Troy: *(trying not to show his annoyance)* No, sir.

Toby: Left yer Ma did he? Too bad. Too bad. That happens from time to time. What did you say his name was?

Mom: *(calling to Troy to rescue him)* Troy! I need you to get something off the top shelf for me.

Troy: *(relieved)* Coming, ma'am. Excuse me, Mr. Jenson. *(crosses quickly to Mom, talks to her in a stage whisper)*
Thank you.

Mom: *(chuckling)* Anytime, Troy. And I have a feelin' this won't be the *last* time! *(Troy gets an item off the shelf and hands it to Mom)*

Toby: *(crossing to Troy)* How old are you, boy?

Mrs. Tucker: *(Pop is checking her out at the counter. She turns towards Toby, disgusted)*
Really Toby, give the boy some room to breathe!

Toby: What are you talking about?

Mrs. Tucker: *(incredulously)* What am I *talking* about? *(The Townspeople [choir and children] enter the store during the song's introduction. Toby and the crowd should interact during the song.)*

Song: Busybody

(Lights Down)

End Scene

Act I
Scene 4

(Lights up dimly on the side street, by the jail)

Setting: A month later. Street lights lit; dim lighting on the side street. It is near dusk. Troy takes the bucket from the room, goes down the stairs and out the front door of the store. The sound of a stage coach can be heard stopping in front of Pop's store. The audience can only "hear" what is going on until Troy and Rachel enter the side street.)

Stage Coach Driver: Howdy, Troy.

Troy: Many passengers tonight, Lonnie?

Stage Driver: Just one. Think you could carry her bag to the hotel for me? I've been ridin' pretty near all day. Think I'm about as tired as the horses!

Troy: Sure, Lonnie. Be glad to.

Rachel: Hello.

Troy: *(after a slight pause, stilted, as if he doesn't know her)* Evening, Miss.

Rachel: Thank you for being willing to take my bag.

Driver: Thanks again Troy! Now to get these horses over to the Liv'ry. Bet they can't wait anymore than me to bed down for the night. We'll be seein' ya!

Troy: Yeh. *(The audience can hear the sound of a stage coach driving off. Troy takes the bag and Rachel's hand, then pulls her into the side street in view of the audience.)*
(in a stage whisper) Rachel, what are you doing here?

Rachel: I had to come see you, Troy.

Troy: I told you it was best for you not to follow us.

Rachel: It's been almost a month, Troy. I—I had to see you, to know you were all right.

Troy: I will be till Rod gets here!

Rachel: I don't see how he could have followed me. I left in the middle of the night, Troy. I didn't give my name out anywhere.

Troy: The coach lines will have a record!

Rachel: (*hangs her head in silence*) I—I'm sorry, Troy. I didn't think about that. All I could think about was seeing you again.

Troy: (*giving her a hug*) Oh, Rachel. You don't know how much I've wanted to see you, how much I've missed you! (*holds her hands, looks directly into her eyes*) I think about you all the time. (*pauses*) But—it's just not safe now. (*pauses*) You'll have to leave on tomorrow's stage.

Rachel: What? (*Pleadingly*) Troy, I've come all this way!

Troy: They hardly know me in this town, Rachel. There's a busybody here that's probably spying on us at this minute!

Rachel: (*unbelievably*) Oh?

Troy: I'm serious, Rachel. He knows what's happening around town before it happens. He's been asking questions.

Rachel: Does he have any idea?

Troy: I don't think so. But, if you meet up with anyone, before the stage leaves, you can't let on that you know me.

Rachel: (*shakes her head in acknowledgment*)

Troy: Rod's sure to follow you here. If you go tomorrow, and travel on to a few more towns, maybe he'll think you're still looking for me. Please, Rachel, you have to understand. This is our chance for a new start.

Rachel: (*walks slowly away from him for a short distance*) And us, Troy? What about us? What about *our* chance for a new start? We were going to be married! (*cries, facing away from Troy*)

Troy: (*crossing to her, puts his hands gently on her shoulders*) They'll be a time for us, Rachel. But—not now. It's too soon.

Rachel: (*turning towards him*) It seems like forever.

Troy: I know. (*He takes her hands and holds them during the song.*)

Song: I Love You

Rachel: *(After the song, Rachel regains her composure. Trying to be brave, she forces a smile as she hands him her bag)* And now, sir, will you please carry my bag for me?

Troy: Be happy to, ma'am! Right this way. *(Troy walks her over to the hotel, then walks up the stairs to the upper room of Pop's store as lights go down on the streets.)*

End Scene

(There are several more scenes in Act I.)

Act II
Scene 1

(Lights up on the jail cell)

Setting: the jail, several days after Mom's funeral. Troy is seated on the bench, reading his Bible. The Sheriff unlocks the door to the cell and lets Troy's mother in.

Sheriff: *(kindly, to Mary)* Take as long as you'd like, ma'am.

Mary: Thank you, Sheriff.

Troy: Mama! *(Mary smiles weakly at Troy. She removes her shawl; Troy takes it from her and lays it in the corner of the cell as he talks.)* I was worried about you when you didn't come yesterday. No one came, not even Rachel.

Mary: *(trying to hold back tears)* I'm sorry, Troy. I should have come, but—

Troy: Rachel's all right, isn't she? *(Mary nods her head in the affirmative)* And Angie?

Mary: *(struggling to speak)* Angie's fine.

Troy: Pop. How's he doing?

Mary: *(sighing)* Pop's doing better. You remember that I told you he'd just been sittin' in their little parlor and staring straight ahead, and that Angie and I had taken over for him in the store? *(Troy nods. Mary forces a smile.)* Well, today he came to work, and—the first thing he did was pull up the shade. You know how Mom would fuss at him for leaving it down.

Troy: *(smiles, chuckles, then grows serious, noticing that Mary is very nervous.)* What is it, Mama? There's something you're not telling me.

Mary: *(sighs, pauses before speaking; has great difficulty telling him.)* The trial's been rescheduled for tomorrow, Troy.

Troy: *(sighs, turns and walks away from her)* I wondered if the judge would stay on.

Mary: Mom's funeral delayed the trial long enough for that expensive lawyer Rod sent for to arrive. They say he's the best in these parts. *(Troy doesn't answer)* Troy, you don't have a lawyer. You don't even have any witnesses!

Troy: *(turning back towards her)* I can defend myself, Mama. Besides, I've got character witnesses. I've got you, and Pop— *(He pauses, suddenly realizing that Pop may not be able to*

testify.) Well, maybe he won't be up to it. But I've got Rachel—

Mary: I'm your mother, Troy. I would be expected to stand up for you. And Rachel's your fiancée. But— (*pauses, looks down*) Rachel's parents heard about the trial and arrived in town yesterday. That's why I didn't come see you. I—I couldn't bring myself to tell you. (*pauses*)

Troy: (*crossing to her; speaks firmly, but gently*) Tell me what Mama? (*Mary struggles with her emotions. Troy puts his right hand on her shoulder and speaks more firmly, but kindly*)
Mama?

Mary: (*looking directly at him*) They won't let Rachel testify in your behalf. They won't even let her come to see you. That's why she wasn't here yesterday. (*pauses, speaks with much emotion*) They don't want her to have anything to do with you! (*turns away, burying her head in her hands, crying*)

Troy: (*pauses at first, obviously struggling with the thought of losing Rachel, then gently leads his mother to the bench.*) Mama, please, come sit down.

Mary: (*after regaining her composure*) That's not the worst of it, Troy. I should have told you a week ago, but I—I couldn't. Rod wanted it to be kept a secret from you, and I just—I just didn't have the heart to tell you, but you need to know—before the trial. (*She pauses, has difficulty continuing.*) His mother's been in town ever since before Mom died. She's come to testify against you. She's been tellin' everyone— And to think that you and Rod were best friends when you were little! (*cries again, unable to continue.*)

Troy: (*gently*) Mama, what is it she's tellin' people? (*sits down beside her, puts his hand on her shoulder, speaks firmly, urgently*) Mama!

Mary: (*pauses before speaking*) That she saw you shoot Jessica!

Troy: (*stunned, Troy rises and backs away from her, speaks in a stage whisper*) What? (*pauses, realizing now what Rod had been referring to; speaks to himself in a stage whisper*) Rod's new evidence. (*pauses, looks away*) You don't—you don't believe her, do you?

Mary: Of course not. But everyone else will. Oh, Troy, there's no way out of this! They're going to hang you! (*cries, almost in hysterics*) They're going to hang you!

Troy: (*pauses for awhile, struggling with his own emotions, then takes his Bible, kneels beside her and takes her hand*) Mama—Mama do you remember when we first got here and you told me to trust the Lord?

Mary: (*nodding, speaks softly*) It's easy to tell someone else.

Troy: (*gently*) I know. (*earnestly*) But Mama, I've had lots of time to think, and pray, and read God's Word. I'd already figured, even before you came here today, that unless God worked a

miracle, I'd—I'd be found guilty. *(pauses)* I don't know why the Lord would let that happen, why He wouldn't clear my name. But, He gave me a verse just yesterday that I've been clinging to. I've read it so many times before, but—it never had so much meaning as it does now. It's Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

(Lights down on scene. Choir begins singing "All Things Work Together" as they come from different parts of the auditorium and file into Pop's store for the trial.)

End Scene

(There is another scene here.)

Act II
Scene 3

(Lights up on the cell)

Setting: the Jail, three days later. The Sheriff brings Troy to the cell; Colby is already there looking out the cell window. Troy has a sling around his left arm. He should occasionally act as though in pain.

Sheriff: Remember what I told you, Troy. You don't have to be locked up with your Pa if you don't want to be.

Troy: No, please, I—I'd like to have some time with him.

Colby: *(looking at Troy, speaks sarcastically)* You ain't got much time, boy. Or maybe they didn't let you in on the fact that they already tried and condemned me while you were at the doc's the last few days.

(The Sheriff gives Troy a sympathetic look then locks the cell door, leaves the sheriff's office, then exits. There is an awkward silence between Troy and his father.)

Colby: *(looking out the cell window)* You'll have a good view of the hangin' right from this cell. It's—tomorrow, in case yer wantin' to know. Guess that won't disappoint you none, will it?

Troy: I won't be watching the *(pauses, looks down)* hangin', Pa.

Colby: *(bitterly)* Yer Mama will probably be there. I bet she can hardly wait till she's got rid of me.

Troy: I don't think she'll be there either.

Colby: *(turning abruptly towards him)* No? She only come to see me once since—since I've been here.

Troy: It's been hard for her, Pa.

Colby: *(cutting him off)* Told me she'd forgiven me for everything I've ever done. Now wasn't that nice of her—

Troy: *(angrily, cutting him off)* You're doing to die tomorrow, and you still—

Colby: (*harshly*) Still what, boy?

Troy: (*his anger building as he speaks*) Still have no remorse for ruining her life, the life of your children, for all the money you've stolen, the lies you've told, the people you've hurt—

Colby: (*giving Troy a backhanded slap that sends Troy against the wall*) And killed, boy! Don't forget that!

Troy: (*pauses, rubs his cheek*) No, sir, I won't forget that. (*as if haunted by the sight of Jessica*) I can't.

(*There is another long awkward silence while Colby paces the floor a few times, obviously nervous.*)

Colby: That was a fool thing you done, boy, runnin' between me and that gun. (*shakes his head*) I wonder, since you got shot instead of me, if they still gave that fellow the reward money he was after. (*pauses*) Anyway, I still can't figure out why you'd try to save my life. What if you had died, boy? (*with sarcasm*) What if you'd died for a worthless creature like me? Now that would have been somethin' fer yer Mama to deal with. The innocent for the guilty.

Troy: I was ready to die. You weren't. You're still not ready. I had hoped it would give you another chance, another chance to repent, but— (*urgently*) You're gonna be in hell tomorrow!

Colby: (*sarcastically*) Oh, that's right. You're goin' to heaven when you die and I'm goin' to hell. You go ahead and condemn yer Pa. You're Mr. Do-Right all the time. You didn't want nothin' to do with my kind of life. (*with disdain*) You've always been a coward, Troy, tied to yer Mama's apron strings!

Troy: (*incredulously*) I purposely—purposely took that bullet for you and you call me a coward? No, I didn't want anything to do with your kind of life, but not because I'm a coward, (*softening*) and not because I'm perfect. I'm as much a sinner as you are.

Colby: (*sarcastically*) Oh? And how do you figure that?

Troy: The Bible says "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Sin is sin. There's not one person on the face of this earth who hasn't broken at least one of God's laws. Besides, the Bible tells us we're born as sinners, separated from God's holiness because of our sin.

Colby: (*threateningly*) I'm warnin' you, Troy. I don't want no Bible thrown in my face.

Troy: If you don't let me tell you what Scripture says, then there's no hope for you. None! It's God's Word that tells us how to escape hell, how to have forgiveness for our sins, how to live a life that's pleasing to God, how we can be assured of heaven when we die.

A Christian isn't someone who thinks they're holier than everyone else; a Christian is

someone who knows they're so wicked in their heart they need a Savior. They know they need Someone else to pay for their sins so they don't have to face judgment themselves.

Colby: (*grabbing Troy by the collar*) I told you to shut your mouth, boy! You know what my temper can be like! Don't push me!

Troy: You do what you want to me. (*earnestly, not disrespectfully*) You can't get out of here, and I'm gonna tell you about the Lord whether you want to hear about Him or not. (*Colby punches Troy in the stomach. Troy speaks as though in pain. He pulls one of the benches over to himself and sits down.*) Don't you understand, Pa? I'm tellin' you because I care about what happens to you! I don't want you to spend eternity in hell!

Colby: (*roughly releases Troy and turns away from him*) Why should you care about me?

Troy: Because you're my Pa—

Colby: (*with some remorse*) I ain't never been any kind of a Pa to you. All I ever brung you, and your Mama, and Angie was grief. Are you forgettin' the times I came home drunk and beat up on all of you? The times you all went hungry because there was no food in the house? The shame of bein' called the son of "Killer Colby?"

Troy: No, sir, I ain't forgettin'. I hate the things you've done. But I love you, 'cause you're my Pa, (*pauses*) and because God loves you.

Colby: (*shaking his head, as if he can't comprehend how Troy or God could love him. He turns away from Troy; it's obvious his attitude has begun to soften*) Go on.

Troy: You said a minute ago, if that bullet had killed me and I'd died in your place it would have been the innocent for the guilty. Right? (*Colby says nothing, but shakes his head in agreement*).

Jesus Christ truly was the innocent Who willingly shed His own blood, gave His life for the guilty. Because He was God's Son, He was the only One Who's ever lived that had no sin. He was the only One Who could pay the penalty for our sin.

Colby: (*sighs*) I'm listenin', Troy.

Troy: Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, but His death only pays for our sin if we ask Him to forgive us. A man has to repent—be sorry for his sin, turn away from them—

Colby: (*cutting him off*) And you think yer Pa's beyond that, don't you? You think I ain't got no conscience, no sorrow for the things I've done. (*sits down slowly on the other bench*) That's where you're wrong, Troy. A man can put on a real tough front, if you know what I mean. (*with emotion*) But inside, he's being eaten away—eaten away by guilt, by memories, by his own wretchedness. (*sinks down on the bench and puts his head in his hands*)

Troy: (*gently*) Then give it to Christ. Ask Him to forgive you.

Colby: It's too late for that, Troy!

Troy: (*urgently*) No! Tomorrow will be too late! There's no chance to receive Christ after death.

Colby: I think I'm beyond savin', Troy.

Troy: (*falling to his knees beside his father*) No, Pa. No one's beyond savin'. The Bible says "Christ came to call sinners to repentance." He came to "save that which was lost." "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." All you need to do pray—

Colby: I don't—I don't know how to pray, Troy.

Troy: Just talk to God from your heart.

Colby: (*bowing his head, prays with deep sincerity*) God, I've never talked to You before. I don't know no fancy words or nothin'. I just—I just know I'm a rotten sinner and I need You. I need You to forgive me for my wickedness and save my wretched soul! (*breaks down, sobbing*)
(*after gaining his composure*) Thank you, son. I—I still don't totally understand how you could care for my soul—

Troy: (*gently cutting him off*) Because Christ cared for mine, Pa.

Song: You Cared For My Soul

Colby: Sheriff! (*excitedly*) Sheriff!

Sheriff: (*entering the office from the street*) What is it? What's goin' on here!

Colby: Sheriff, please will you—will you get my wife. I need to talk to her. I got somethin' important to tell her!

Sheriff: (*looking from Colby to Troy*) This some sort of trick?

Troy: No, sir. (*pause, -looks at his Pa then back to the sheriff, speaks with emotion, as if trying to hold back tears*) It's an answer to prayer.

Lights down

End Scene

(There is more to Act II)

Please remember: This is not a complete script. No portion of this play may be performed without the purchase of the Director's Notebook.