

LifeTales
Musical Biography
Series



**ABRAHAM
LINCOLN**

Script, Music and Lyrics by
MICHAEL TENNANT

Orchestration by
JEFF MOORE

"Abraham Lincoln"
By Michael Tennant

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In Order of Appearance)

Matt	A Young Boy
Jeff	A Young Boy
Robert Lincoln	Adult Son of Abraham Lincoln
Mr. Rutledge	Father of Abraham's Friend, Ann
Ann Rutledge	Dying friend of Abraham Lincoln
James	Friend and Confidant to Abraham Lincoln
Mary Todd	Abraham Lincoln's Wife
Slave Owner	
Stephen Douglas	Political and Personal Rival to Abraham Lincoln
General Ulysses S. Grant	Leader of the Union Army
Robert E. Lee	Leader of the Confederate Army
Attendant	
Abolitionists, Slave Owners and Villagers	

SYNOPSIS OF SONGS

1. "The Abolitionist's Cry"Chorus
 2. "You Have A Heartbeat"Ann Rutledge
 3. "Amazing Grace" Chorus
 4. "Tariff of Abomination"Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas
 5. "Choosing A New Leader"Abraham Lincoln, Stephen Douglas and Chorus
 6. "The Civil War" Abraham Lincoln, James, Grant, Lee
 7. "Battle Hymn of the Republic"Chorus
- Finale: "Heartbeat of a Nation"Chorus

LifeHance

T.H.E.A.T.E.R

"Abraham Lincoln"

By Michael Tennant

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Overture

SCENE 1: THE FORD'S THEATER – 1922

(The Theater is black. Suspenseful music plays. A dim light appears as two young boys sneak onstage)

Matt I don't like it... we should go.
Jeff We can't... not until we get a look at the balcony where Lincoln was sitting.
Matt We don't have to sit in it... do we?
Jeff That was the dare. We can't tell the other guys we chickened out.
Matt I feel like we're being watched.
Jeff Think about it... this building has been closed down for 57 years. No one comes in or out.
Everyone's afraid. My father says evil still lives here.
Matt Do you think it's haunted?
Jeff I don't know... it sure is dusty.
Matt Look... There's the balcony... right over there.
Jeff April 14, 1865... the evening of Good Friday... President Lincoln and his wife were here, in this room. The last thing President Lincoln ever saw were actors performing on this stage. A man named John Wilkes Booth crept in the balcony with Lincoln and his wife and put a gun to Lincoln's head. You know... my grandfather was in the theater that night. He told my mother the story, and she told me He said there was total panic, but at the same time, it seemed like everything stood still. People were screaming, trying to find a doctor. And Mrs. Lincoln... they say that she went crazy. That was the last night a play was ever performed here. My grandfather remembered that night until his dying day.
Robert's Voice I remember that night too. *(The two boys looks around, terrified)*
Jeff Um... please tell me your voice just got really low.
Matt My father said that won't happen for about another year.
Jeff Who's there?
(The silhouette of a tall man in a top hat and long coat is seen)
Robert My name is Robert.
Jeff We should go.
Matt Right.
(Both boys run quickly offstage. Robert Lincoln stands in the center of the stage. Slowly, the two boys walk back on.)
Matt Um... Mr. Robert, sir?
Robert Yes?
Matt The door we came in through is locked... we can't get out.
Robert I see.
Jeff Please don't hurt us.
Robert The only person who ever hurt anyone in this room is John Wilkes Booth. You have nothing to fear.
Matt Oh... oh good. That's a relief.
Jeff That's great.
Matt That's fantastic.
Jeff That's wonderful.
Matt I don't feel any better.
Jeff Neither do I.
Robert Might I ask what the two of you are doing in the theater?
Matt Weeeeeee....
Jeff Uh...
Matt Weeeee..... were standing with some friends out by the new Lincoln monument...

Jeff It's not too far away.
Matt Today is the dedication ceremony.
Jeff And we got to talking about Ford's Theater and some of our friends said it was haunted.
Matt And we were dared to sneak in and come stand in the balcony where... you know...
Jeff And we said "yes," although now I see that was a bad idea...
Matt And I think we'd like to leave.
Jeff We would, yes.
Robert You don't want to stand in the balcony before you go?
Matt You don't mind?
Robert What happened in this room is an important part of history. People need to know what happened here, or this story may be forgotten. It's an ugly part of history... but... it is history nonetheless. I have some time. Would you like to hear the story?
(Matt and Jeff look to each other for help)
Jeff I... I just don't even know how to respond to that.
Matt We should let him tell us. We'll keep him talking about something he's interested in. That will keep him happy while we try and think of a way to get out.
Jeff Um... Robert, sir?
Robert Yes?
Jeff We would love to hear the story.
(Underscore music begins)
Robert Let me take you back to the year 1835. The country was divided for several reasons, but it was slavery that caused the greatest division. It was during that time when a young man named Abraham was summoned to come as soon as he could to meet up with an old friend. Abraham was a very busy person, and had been working long hours for the state legislature, but, this was a very special friend, and Abraham had always said he'd do anything for her.
(The action transitions from Robert, Matt, and Jeff going back in time approximately 90 years. We see a group of people going about their daily business, as an abolitionist gives a warning to those around)

SCENE 2: A BORDER STATE/OUTDOORS

SONG: "THE ABOLITIONIST'S CRY"

Abolitionists Don't you have a conscience? Don't you have a soul?
 Don't you see the danger? Don't you hear warning bells toll?
 There's evil among us, tell me can't you see
 A storm is brewing in our land because of slavery
Slave Owner A slave is a human made by our Holy God
 A slave is property I have to work upon my sod
Abolitionist I've a plantation to run so don't waste my time
Slave Owner Free the slaves or you will face the judgment divine
 How dare you?!
(Slave owner grabs abolitionist. The scene is about to become violent. More abolitionists come on stage and see what is happening)
Abolitionists Your heart is full of evil, your soul is full of hate
 Show some pity to the slaves before it's too late
 A righteous anger's brewing and it won't be long
 Until the slaves are freed and owner's punished for their wrong
(Slave owners enter)
Slave Owner 1 The slaves we own are proof of God's provision for our land
Slave Owner 2 We prayed for help to yield our crops, God gave us helping hands
Slave Owner 3 We give them food and shelter and the discipline they need
All Slave owners Any slave who asks for more should be punished for their greed
Abolitionists You'll see the error of your ways, slavery will end
Slave Owners The slaves will not go free and we will never bend
All If push comes to a shove we'll be ready for a fight
 Before your blood is shed you had better see the light

(As the crowd begins to walk angrily away, Abraham walks onstage carrying a bag. Mr. Rutledge sees him and greets him.)

SCENE 3: THE RUTLEDGE HOME

Mr. Rutledge Abraham, thank God you've come.
Abraham Mr. Rutledge, so good to see you again. I received word that Ann wanted to see me, and I came as soon as I could.
Mr. Rutledge And we appreciate it, Abraham.
Abraham Ann is one of my closest friends, Mr. Rutledge. I always told her I'd drop whatever I was doing and travel across the world if necessary to get to her, and I meant it. Sir... are you alright? Did I say something?
Mr. Rutledge Abraham, Ann isn't doing well. She's very ill, and the doctors aren't able to do anything for her. She's been in bed, just waiting for you to come. She sleeps, mostly, but every time she wakes up, she asks if you've arrived.
Abraham What's wrong with her?
Mr. Rutledge It's a fever of some sort. No stopping it, we've tried everything. I've prayed and prayed and... go to her, Abraham. Seeing you will make her happy. I know it will.
(Ann enters)
Mr. Rutledge Ann, look who's here. It's Abraham Lincoln, come to see you.
Ann Abraham... I heard your voice.
Abraham Good day, Ann.
(Ann sits in a chair)
Mr. Rutledge You should be in bed.
Ann I'll be fine, Father. I've been having a good morning.
Mr. Rutledge I'll leave the two of you. *(Exits)*
Ann I knew you'd come, Abraham.
Abraham Ann, I had no idea you were ill. I didn't know that...
Ann That you were coming here to say "good-bye"?
Abraham Please don't talk that way.
Ann There's no use pretending, Abraham. My body is giving out, and though no one has come right out and told me, I know I won't be here much longer. But, I assure you, my mind and my heart work as well as ever, and I'll have many memories of us to take to heaven.
Abraham Ann... I have the largest vocabulary of anyone I know, but, my brain can't seem to find the words I want to say.
Ann Then let your heart speak, for it was your heart that made me so fond of you.
Abraham Even though we've parted ways, there has not been a day, not an hour when you were not in my mind.
Ann Abraham...
Abraham Yes...
Ann I just wanted to say your name... Abraham. Oh, don't cry. I don't want my last memory of you to be with tears in your eyes. Where's that boy, who had such a love for life, and for books, who was so elegant with words, and who jumped into any situation when something wasn't right, whether it was his business or not... whether it was in his best interest or not... who wanted to become a lawyer, and make something of himself? Let me talk to that boy one last time. What have you been doing, Abraham.
Abraham I'm still working for the legislature. It's good work. It's an honest job.
Ann That's not what you told me you wanted to do with your life. Did your dreams change?
Abraham Well, no...
Ann Are you settling for something you don't really want?
Abraham I've realized I'm just a boy from the backwoods of Illinois, who should be happy with the simple life he was given.
Ann Abraham, I don't ever want to hear you talk like that. My life is being taken from me, there's nothing I can do about that, but you sound as if you're about to throw your life away...
Abraham We don't need to talk about my problems Ann. You're ill. You should be trying to get well.
Ann Come on, Abraham. Talk to me.
Abraham There are times lately... I've been wondering what I've been chasing in life. Sometimes,

I feel as though I'm wasting my time. A man tries his hardest to offer a service to the world, tries to make things better, and he's knocked down. He gets up, brushes himself off, and gets knocked down even harder. The cycle just goes on repeating itself. And for what? After years of trying, nothing I've done has made a difference. Nothing has changed. So, I've decided to learn to be content. I'm thankful for the life I have.

Ann But it's not the life you wanted. You can't stop, Abraham. Promise me... you've worked so hard. Don't let a few setbacks stop you. You only get one shot at life, and.... unfortunately, I'm learning just how short our time really is. You have one shot, Abraham. Grab hold of every opportunity, and don't let go.

Abraham I know what you're going to say, Ann. I'm the only one who can fulfill my purpose in life.
Ann You're also the only one who can decide whether or not that purpose will be fulfilled. Some may encourage you, others may discourage you, but when **you** decide to quit, that's when it's over. Don't let it be over, Abraham. Now that I'm facing death, I've been doing a lot of thinking about life...

SONG: "YOU HAVE A HEART BEAT"

Ann You have a heart beat, you have a dream
Guard it, protect it, let nothing intervene
Sometimes friends surround you, sometimes you're on your own
But the choice of what you do in life is yours and yours alone
Circumstances never will be right
If it's worthwhile, you will have to fight
There's a flame burning in the night
A fire to light your way
There's always hurt, there's always tears
Always heartache, always fears
But push on through all the years
They'll tell your story someday

Ann: *(Spoken)* You have a life to live, and a legacy to leave, Abraham. Do it...

And believe me when I say
They'll tell your story someday

(Mr. Rutledge enters)

Mr. Rutledge I'm sorry to interrupt. Ann, the doctor has come calling. He'd like to see how you're doing.

Ann This will just take a few minutes Abraham... will you stay?

Abe Of course.

(Ann and Mr. Rutledge exit. Abraham faces downstage. The music transitions, the lights transition, and villagers walk slowly on stage)

(Transitions into funeral)

SCENE 4: CEMETERY

SONG: "AMAZING GRACE"

Villagers T'was grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Then when we first begun

(When the song ends, the villagers slowly exit. James approaches)

James

Abraham!

Abraham

Good day, James. How are you? It's been a long time.

James

I'm well Abraham. It has been a while, hasn't it? It's unfortunate we're meeting under these circumstances. We'll all miss Ann. I know you were very close to her heart.

Abraham

I don't know what I would have done without Ann around. My Father and I never could seem to get along, no matter how hard we tried. When my mother and sister died, I found myself wanting to isolate myself. But Ann... somehow she got through the barriers. She never thought much of herself, but, she was a very special woman.

James

You're not looking well, Abraham.

Abraham

I'm fine... It's just that... its just now dawning on me how much I owe to Ann. She's the one who always encouraged me. Hardship after hardship, she would always tell me to keep trying, to keep working harder. She'd remind me of the words of the Scriptures.... A man reaps what he sows... work hard, be relentless, and even the most unlikely person can be a success.

James

Noble words indeed. So tell me, what does the future hold for you, Abraham?

Abraham

I've been thinking of getting my law degree.

James

What?

Abraham

Something that Ann said to me, right before she passed really got me thinking. I've wanted to become a lawyer for sometime now. Over the years I've seen so many poor souls who have been unable to represent themselves in court. I'd like to represent the helpless who are on the side of nobility.

James

Correct me if I'm wrong, but, don't you have to go to law school to become a lawyer?

Abraham

Yes, if you are incapable of teaching yourself. However, I've been in charge of my own education since I was a lad, and I happen to think I would make a wonderful lawyer.

James

You never cease to amaze me.

Abraham

It was good seeing you, James. I should be on my way.

James

What's the rush?

Abraham

I just feel like being alone with some books and a cup of coffee.

James

You shouldn't be alone at a time like this. There's a ball tonight...

Abraham

Thank you, James. I'm just not in the mood.

James

Of course you're not in the mood. I'm not in the mood either, we've just come from a funeral!

That's why we need to attend the ball, to cheer us up! We don't need to stay all night. Just long enough to get some fresh air, some dinner...maybe a little wine.

Abraham

James...

James

Abraham, its not good for you to go back into isolation. Think of what Ann would want for you.

Abraham

Alright, fine.

James

I knew deep down you wanted to come.

Abraham

I don't want to come, I just don't feel like arguing.

James

Some lawyer you'll make. Tell me where you're staying. I'll pick you up in my carriage.

(Abraham and James exit. Robert, Matt and Jeff enter)

SCENE 5: FORD'S THEATER

Robert

An entire life that could have been thrown away was rekindled and fueled by the final words of a friend who would never be forgotten.

Matt

I've never heard of anyone teaching themselves to be a lawyer.

Robert

Within all of us lies a sense of destiny... of dreams and hope. The path which leads to that which we most desire is never an easy road to follow. It means making the most difficult choices and standing up for what you know is right, even when no one else is standing

with you.
Jeff What happened at the ball?
Robert It was a cotillion ball. All the people in the area who were of great importance, or... who thought they were of great importance were in attendance. The gentlemen and ladies were dressed in their finest attire, hoping to impress anyone looking their way. Everyone seemed to be having a wonderful evening. Well... almost everyone.
(James enters and sees Abraham sitting alone. Other guests are making their way onstage)

SCENE 6: OUTDOORS AT THE COTILLION BALL

James Abraham, what are you doing out here by yourself?
Abraham I'm trying to find the strength to walk home.
James Don't you like the ball?
Abraham The ball is wonderful, James. The people seem very kind, the meal was excellent, the musicians are sensational. But, I'm in mourning, and I'm afraid that overshadows everything else.
James Alright. I'll get my coach, and we'll call it an night.
Abraham Thanks for understanding.
James Just as soon as I've had a little more wine.
Abraham I don't think you need anymore to drink.
(James walks offstage, stumbling a bit. Mary Todd enters. She notices Abraham, takes a deep breath, and decides to start a conversation)

Mary Good evening.
Abraham Good evening. *[There is an awkward pause]*
Mary It's a wonderful ball, isn't it?
Abraham It's very nice, yes.
Mary Of course, I noticed the violin player's using a rather second rate instrument. The higher notes are shrieking in such a way I'm sure most of the guests were given a headache. You'd think the rest of the musicians might have a chance of overpowering the violin player. No such luck. Are you alright?
Abraham Yes, ma'am. It's just been a long day.
Mary You look as though you've just come from a funeral.
(Mary laughs. Abraham looks up at her)
What? Oh my goodness... you did just come from a funeral, didn't you? I'm so sorry. My mouth is always getting me into trouble. I always say the wrong thing at the worst possible time. I never do know when to stop talking. I always seem to end up talking too much. Some people get so annoyed with me. They end up shooting me these death glares, and I tell you, if looks could kill... oh... oh my, that wasn't a good thing to say...
Abraham Ma'am...
Mary Yes?
Abraham Stop while you're ahead. You're digging your own grave here.
Mary Oh... so there is a sense of humor behind those sad brown eyes. My name is Mary. Mary Todd.
Abraham It's good to meet you. My name is...
(A man enters, yelling at his slave offstage)

Slave Owner Now you listen to me! You get back there and make sure those horses don't run off! I don't care one bit if this state doesn't recognize the right to own slaves! You're traveling with me and you're my property! Disobey me again and I'll take your head off!
(Slave owner turns to Mary and Abraham. He is suddenly a very polite man.)
Oh... well, good evening, sir. Ma'am. Forgive me. I didn't notice you there. That man is my property, and... well, he was trying to sneak up to the house and listen to the music. He doesn't realize folks ain't accustomed to his type round here. Don't let him worry you none. He means no harm. He's really very friendly, and you can be assured, I'll give him a beating when we get home.
Mary Oh, sir, that really isn't necessary. We didn't even notice him.
Slave Owner Ah, well, that's right kind of you, folks. Right kind. Have a good evening.

Mary You too, sir. *[Slave Owner exits]* I feel so badly for slaves when I see the kind of treatment they receive. My father says they're brought to America on ships from Africa. Some of them are captured, and some of them are tricked onboard, thinking they'll be given a better life. Have you heard anything like that?

Abraham It's true, yes. Once they're here, they're trapped. Most of them are unable to read or write. Their whole world becomes the plantation they're working on. They spend their lives working for another man's gain, and if they disobey, they're beaten, or killed. If they escape and are captured, they're killed. Any slaves who have families on the same plantation would probably never dream of escaping, for fear that their families would be forced to pay for their crime. Have you ever been to see the plantations?

Mary No.

Abraham Hundreds of thousands of slaves... maybe millions. And the number is growing every day. There's no chance of hope for them. They'll live their lives as slaves, and that's just the way it is. But I'll tell you this, I'd like to see slave owners trade places with their slaves and see how they like it.

Mary I didn't think I was going to be able to get you to talk to me. I guess you just needed the right topic.

Abraham Forgive me. My mouth is always getting me into trouble. I never do know when to stop talking. Some people get so annoyed with me. They end up shooting me these glares, and I tell you... if looks could kill.

Mary Sounds like we're two peas in a pod.
(Stephen Douglas enters)

Stephen Mary, here you are.

Mary Oh, Stephen.. I'm terribly sorry. I didn't mean to be outside for so long. *[To Abraham]* This is my escort for the evening, Mr. Stephen Douglas.

Stephen I was having a divine political conversation with a few of the other guests, when some drunken fool intruded on the discussion. He obviously couldn't defend his insane points of view because he was rambling on and on about nothing. He ran off to get some idiotic friend of his to back him up. I made my escape while he was gone.

Mary I'm sorry to hear that, Stephen. Shall we be on our way, then?

Stephen Yes. The sooner the better.

Mary It was good meeting you... oh dear, I never did get your name.
(James enters with a few other men and women. He is very tipsy.)

James I found you.

Stephen Oh no, not again.

James And I'd like you to meet my friend, Abraham Lincoln of the Illinois State Legislature. He'll tell you exactly why my view on the Tariff of 1828 is better than yours.

Douglas Well, can it be? Mr. Lincoln, I did not see you there.

Mary Do you two know each other?

Douglas We've conducted some legislative business. It's been a while, Abraham, but wouldn't you know it, here we are, face to face.

James I wouldn't say face to face. He's a lot taller than you.

Douglas *(to James)* My, my... you are a silly little nuisance, aren't you? *(to Abraham)* Well, let's hear it, Mr. Lincoln. I'm very interested in hearing. How you intend to go about defending the infamous Tariff of Abomination.

Abe The need for the tariff always seemed simple enough to me.

Douglas I'm sure it did. After all, the North stood to benefit from the tariff. It was the South who was forced to take a bullet.

SONG: "TARIFF OF ABOMINATION"

Abe The economy in our land was getting out of hand
The bank had failed and there was panic, the situation wasn't grand
We needed money in the North to get on our feet again

Douglas And so you came to steal the golden egg away from the hen
Mr. Lincoln you have got the brains of a stack of bricks
(to crowd) You've got to read between the lines when discussing politics
You've got to know the ins and outs of the manipulative mind

As I recall the North's solution was not very kind
 They raised the prices of their goods so high that no one could afford to buy a thing
 Thinking this would end all of their suffering
 The North crossed the line in a most preposterous way
 They set ridiculous prices and forced the South to pay
Abe This was not a decision that was made out of greed
 Sometimes things are good, sometimes economy recedes
Douglas You forbade us to buy goods from anywhere but the North
 And put a tariff in place to make this foolishness go forth
 You should stop and think before you open up your mouth
 The North found itself in trouble so it punished the South
 Their logic was atrocious, it was **all** based upon greed
 You Northern folks are lucky Dixieland did not secede
Abe You have your right to your opinion and that right won't be denied
 But America's a union, we're not two separate sides
 We've had successes and failures and sometimes we need a hand
 And so we looked to you, our brothers, down in Dixieland
Douglas I needed a good laugh, you play a great comedic role
Abe It's not a laughing matter, the union is a whole
Douglas The hole is in the heads of those heading up the whole
Abe Our nation's unity should have been a common goal
 Our fathers died to pay the cost to make our country great
 You'd throw all that away simply for convenience sake?
 What's purchased by blood must not be tossed aside
 Yet so quickly you'd secede and cause a great divide
Douglas I am not the heartless fool you make me out to be
 I know well the sacrifice it took to make our country free
 And in honor of the men who died so I can have a voice
Abe I say "how dare you try and take my cash, my freedom, and my choice"
 It's not just our economy, my friend, it's yours as well
 You must put your duty to our land before the freedom bell
Douglas You choose to complain instead of coming to our side
 You have a right to your opinion, and that right won't be denied
 (*Underscore continues over dialogue*)

Douglas Though I wish I was someplace else when you exercised your right to freedom of speech.
Mary Mr. Douglas!
Douglas Forgive me, Miss Todd. That was uncalled for. Sometimes I find it difficult to keep my wit to myself when a target is so accessible. Thank you, Mr. Lincoln, for the... interesting discussion, although I must say, the logic of your inebriated friend makes more sense to me than your ramblings. I acknowledge your loyalty to God and State, but I'll offer you some free advice – don't allow your attachment to the past to prevent you from doing what's best for the future.
Abe I'm glad that advice was free, because its not worth anything. If your only solution is to suggest that our country be torn apart...
Douglas Goodnight, Mr. Lincoln. Miss Todd, shall we?
 (*Stephen Douglas and Mary Todd exit. The crowd follows them out. James stumbles about the stage*)
James Abraham, can you help me find my carriage? Here, horsey horsey.

SCENE 7: FORD'S THEATER

Robert As you can see, there was still great tension in the land. I believe anyone to took the time to examine our country could see the trouble was on its way. But as for Abraham Lincoln, he disappeared from the world of politics. He did just what he intended... he studied night and day, and obtained his law degree without ever enrolling in a law school. He became an outstanding

lawyer. Quite the success story for a poor boy who grew up in the back woods of Kentucky and never received any formal education, wouldn't you say?

Matt Was he able to recover from the death of Miss Rutledge?

Robert He moved on with his life, but... no. I don't believe he was ever able to recover completely. Nor do I believe he wanted to recover. He carried Ann's spirit with him everywhere, always recalling the words of encouragement she shared. He did however, find another love.

Jeff Who?

Robert Miss Mary Todd.

Matt The lady he met at the cotillion ball?

Robert The very same.

Jeff But she was there that night with Mr. Douglas.

Matt Oh, I bet that didn't go over well.

Robert Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln became rivals in the social setting, in politics, and in life. They were always in competition, and there was always excitement when the two of them were together.

Matt What happened between Abraham and Miss Todd?

Robert Her family, who was quite wealthy, became furious when they learned she had stopped seeing Stephen Douglas in order to court the impoverished Abraham Lincoln. But Mary Todd saw the greatness within him, even when others didn't. She pledged her life to him, and the two were married.

Jeff Well, that's good. He's a successful lawyer, and married. Guess life was finally looking up for him.

Robert This is true, and there were times when Abraham was never more content. Mr. Lincoln worked his way up, and before long, he was arguing cases before the supreme court. He and his wife became the proud parents of some wonderful children. But happiness didn't last forever. Mr. Lincoln's second son passed away from tuberculosis as the age of three. Abraham and Mary were devastated. It was also around this time when a series of events turned Lincoln's head towards politics once again.

SCENE 8: THE LINCOLN HOUSEHOLD

Mary Good morning, James.

James Good morning. Is Abraham in?

Mary He is, James, but I should warn you, he's in one of his moods.

James Oh, well, I'm sure I'll be able to cheer him right up.

Mary Are you sure about that?
(Abraham enters)
Look, Abraham, James has come to call on you.
(Abraham stares at James briefly, then says in a low, almost sarcastic tone)

Abe I couldn't be happier.

Mary *[To James]* Good luck with that. *[Exits]*

James Well, are you surprised to see me?

Abraham Why should I be surprised to see you? You're over here five or six times a week.

James Alright, let's examine this mood that you're in. You're not sulking, so you must not be sad. Your fists aren't clenched, and your eyebrows aren't furrowed, so you must not be angry. You're quiet, but you still have your wits about you, which means you must be doing some serious thinking.

Abe You're far too perceptive to be a man, but on my life James, you'd be the ugliest woman I've ever seen.

James What's on your mind?

Abe Did you see the newspaper today?

James No.

Abe Stephen Douglas finally did it. All these years, I watched his rise to politics... I've heard him speak, I've seen him convince others of some absolutely ludicrous ideas... but now he's finally crossed the line. He's finally convinced enough people to go along with his warped idea of how this country should be.

James What's going on?

Abe The Kansas-Nebraska act has been passed.

James No!

Abe It's true... its really happening.

James Doesn't anyone in this country have any common sense?

Abe I was thinking the same thing, James.

James What is this world coming to? Is there anything that can possibly save us now?

Abe James. You have no idea what the Kansas-Nebraska Act is, do you?

James No... no idea at all.

Abe Kansas and Nebraska have both been officially introduced as new territories, and settlers are invited to go and claim their land.

James Well that's great! That's nothing to be upset about! In fact, you and I should jump on our horses and head out there. We could both grab ourselves some property and build ourselves a little summer home. We could...

Abe James... the Kansas-Nebraska act completely nullifies the Missouri Compromise. Both states are allowed to decide whether they will allow slavery.

James I know this news should bother me... I just don't know why.

Abe For heaven's sake, James, having a conversation with you almost forces me to put complicated matters into terms that elementary students can understand.

James That's why I'm here.

Abe I can see that. James, this is going to split the country right in half. Just wait. The slavery issue is one of the most fiercely debated issues I've seen. Some people will move into the new territories and set up plantations with their slaves. Other settlers will show up and demand there be no slavery. The North is about to meet the South, and it will not be a pretty sight.

James You don't think they can settle this by flipping a coin?
(Underscore music begins)

Ab There's going to be bloodshed. This is going to tear our country apart unless someone puts a stop to it. But heaven help those who are involved in trying to stop the violence. It's going to be like reaching down and trying to stop two cobras from biting each other.

James That's what you were thinking about when I arrived. You're thinking of running for office, aren't you.

Abe I'm going to do it.

SCENE 9: OUTSIDE IN A LOCAL TOWN

SONG: "CHOOSING A NEW LEADER"

Villager 1 A slaughter has started, common sense departed
The violence is spreading everyday
In Kansas they are fighting over the right to own slaves
And hundreds are going to their graves

Villager 2: Have you read the papers, the situation's worse
The new territory's fallen under a curse

Villager 3: For years the blood was boiling now it's all come to a head
Villager 4 Stay away from Kansas or you may end up dead
Kansas Bloody Kansas Bloody Kansas Bloody Kansas

Abe I wonder friends if I could have a moment of your time
There's no use in mincing words it's time to lay it on the line
The melody our country sings has struck a tragic note
This division must end and so I'm asking for your vote.
I'm going to run for President and I intend to win
Though the battle will be vicious and the situation grim
Will you help me spread the word my friends, we haven't very long
My opponent's Stephen Douglas, and his following is strong
(Lincoln exits, Douglas enters from the opposite side)

Douglas Over here my friends, I have a favor to ask
I hope to be your President, and it's a daunting task
To raise the support I need, but now I have begun

My opponent is a lunatic named Abraham Lincoln
He has a dangerous proposal for our nation, have you heard?
He wants equality for the slaves, it truly is absurd
Why he believes that whites might work for black men someday
Cast your vote for me and make this problem go away
(Douglas exits, Villager enters from the opposite side)

Villager 5

Excuse me, have you heard the latest news yet in this town?

An attack was made on Harper's Ferry by John Brown

They say he gathered an army and led an attack

He killed a lot of people in hopes to free the blacks

Harper's Ferry's in Virginia, the violence has spread

It's no longer just in Kansas that blood has been shed.

I have family in Virginia, I hope they were not harmed

For our own safety, we'd better take up arms

The violence is truly more than I can bear

I'm not able to sleep at night, there is such a scare

The killing hasn't stopped, the situation's worse

Our entire country's fallen under a curse

Both sides feel angry,

Both sides feel hate

Cast your vote for Stephen Douglas before it's too late

Citizens are taking matters into their own hands

A house that is divided is a house that will not stand

Militia's have formed, the situation's a mess

Did any of you hear the Copper Union Address?

Mr. Lincoln spoke, he has Holy insight

He said "have faith, let's move forward for right makes might"

I really think that he's the answer

I agree with you

But other folks are holding onto Douglas' view

Can either man stop the fight?

I hope its not too late

Will America meet a self-destructive fate?

[Spoken over underscore]

Villager 4

Villager 2

Villager 5

Villager 4

Villager 3

All Villagers

Abraham

Before the votes are cast tomorrow morning, I would like to say to you all, the probability that we may fail in this struggle ought not deter us from the support of a cause we believe is right; it shall not deter me. Those who deny freedom for others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God cannot retain it. Cast your vote for the Republican Party. Do this, and I am confident when all is said and done, unity and equality will prevail.

[Singing resumes]

Villagers

With great trembling and fear the votes were cast

We pray God keeps us safe, that this trouble will not last

Will the shadows pass away, will we see the rising sun

(A villager enters with the final newspaper)

Villager 4

Villagers

[Spoken] The votes have been counted

America's new President is Abraham Lincoln

(As the Villagers sing, Lincoln places his hand on the Bible and is sworn in)

Mr. Lincoln we have given you our vote of confidence

We pray our choice won't bring about a tragic consequence

As you lead us through these times, we pray for providence divine

God bless you on your way, May our God guide you today

(The villagers line up to shake Abraham's hand. James and Mary enter)

Mary Abraham...

Abraham Mary... might I say you're going to be a dazzling first lady.

James Mr. President... we need you to walk with us very calmly, into the building across the street.

Abraham James, what is this? I need to thank my supporters.

James Abraham, it's no secret that many people were outraged the day you were elected, but now that you've been sworn in, things have gotten worse. There's a militia on their way here right now to try and assassinate you.

Abraham What?

Mary We need to leave right away, Abraham.

James Listen, you and Mary need to go into the building across the street and out the back door. There's a carriage that will take you straight to the White House. A few soldiers will ride with you to make sure you're safe. I'll stay behind and collect your belongings and I'll meet up with you tomorrow night.

Mary Abraham, we need to hurry.

Abraham Alright, James, thank you for the warning.

James God speed, Mr. President.

SCENE 10: FORD'S THEATER

Robert And so, on November 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln won the Presidential election. There were many who were furious, and refused to follow the lead of a President representing the newly formed Republican Party. On December 20 of the same year, President Lincoln saw one of his greatest political fears come to pass – South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas seceded as well. In time, Arkansas, Virginia and North Carolina also seceded. On February 18 of 1861, less than four months after Abraham Lincoln was elected President, the Confederate states inaugurated their own President – Jefferson Davis, formerly of the state senate. It was like an aggressive form of cancer—America was destroying itself from within. The hatred, the division, the blood shed... this was all just the beginning.

SCENE 11: THE WHITE HOUSE

Mary Abraham?

Abe Come in, Mary.

Mary I haven't seen you all day. I wish you had come down for dinner and eaten with the rest of us.

Abe I'm sorry. I had to write a few urgent letters.

Mary They couldn't have waited?

Abe *[snapping slightly]* I wouldn't have said they were urgent if they could have waited.

Mary Abraham... *[slightly hurt]*

Abe Mary... I'm sorry. I have an awful headache and I admit, I'm not in the best of moods. What time is it?

Mary It's nearly midnight. Can you come to bed and pick up where you left off in the morning?

Abe No. I'm sorry. There's just too much to do. You go ahead. I'll be there in a few hours.

Mary Alright, Abraham, but you can't keep this up. You barely slept last night, nor did you sleep the night before. You have huge bags under your eyes. Have you looked in the mirror lately?

Abe I've been avoiding mirrors. *[pause]* Mary, when I became President, I truly hoped I would be able to keep this country from division. I thought I would be the voice of reason, and that I would be used by God to restore unity. The opposite has happened, and things are getting worse everyday. Civilians have been attacking one another for sometime now, but I received word that the Confederacy has launched a military attack on our Fort Sumter. I have now come to the realization that we are not going to get out of this without a fight. And, Mary, what a mess this country is in. I'm going to have to rally an army together. And if I send that army in to crush the Confederate forces and free the slaves, what on earth are we going to do with all the blacks? Most of them have been forbidden any type of education. They can't read, or write. They have no homes, no money. They spend their whole lives dreaming of freedom, but most of them wouldn't know how to survive away from the plantation. And here's