

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: *The woods around Bucktown, Maryland – 1849. Nightfall. The stage is a forest of trees with one particularly large tree center. Downstage of the trees, a scrim runs the entire length of the playing area.*

AT RISE: *The stage is dark. We hear the typical night sounds associated with a summer wood: crickets chirping and the babbling of a brook. As the music begins, the following words are projected on the scrim: “**In 1849, over 3 million black slaves toiled in the American South...**” These words fade and the following appear: “**One night, one of them escaped...**” These words fade, lights up behind the scrim reveals the forest, then...*

OVERSEER (O.S.)

RUNAWAY!

#1 The Chase (underscore only)

(As the music changes tempo, the scrim lifts. HARRIET runs on stage and stops center, breathing hard. She hears a noise, looks over her shoulder, then runs off opposite. OVERSEER and two PATROLLERS enter, carrying lanterns and rifles. They look around, then run off in the same direction as HARRIET. As the music continues, HARRIET and the men appear again and again in choreographed moves, with HARRIET constantly eluding her pursuers. HARRIET exits for the last time, the three men enter and collide with EDWARD BRODAS, Harriet’s owner. The music crashes to a stop.)

BRODAS

Who is it?

OVERSEER

Harriet Tubman, Mr. Brodas.

BRODAS

Dammit! How long has she been missing?

OVERSEER

Not long. Her trail's still fresh. We've set the hounds on it.

(We hear the baying of hounds in the distance.)

BRODAS

Go!

(The PATROLLERS exit. The OVERSEER turns to follow when BRODAS grabs him by the collar and hauls him in close.)

You find her quick now. She's worth a lot of money to me.

OVERSEER

Yes, sir.

(BRODAS releases him. OVERSEER runs off after the PATROLLERS.)

#2 Runaway

BRODAS

OUT THERE
 IN THE DARKNESS
 SHE IS OUT THERE
 IN THE DARKNESS
 SOMEWHERE OUT THERE
 IN THE DARKNESS
 SHE IS OUT THERE
 OUT OF SIGHT

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE
 IN THE DARKNESS
 IN THE COLD GLOOM
 IN THE STARKNESS
 SHE IS RUNNING
 THROUGH THE DARKNESS
 OF THE NIGHT

AND WHEN I FIND HER
 AND I WILL FIND HER
 I'LL REMIND HER
 I'M THE MASTER
 SHE'S THE SLAVE

BRODAS (cont.)

AND WHEN I FIND HER
THEN I WILL BEAT HER
BY GOD, I'LL TREAT HER
LIKE A DOG THAT MISBEHAVES

SHE'S FORGOTTEN
IN THE DARKNESS
SHE'S FORGOTTEN
THAT I OWN HER
YES I OWN HER
IN THE DARKNESS
I STILL OWN YOU
IN THE DARKNESS
AND THE DAY
I WILL ALWAYS BE YOUR MASTER
YOU MY SLAVE

*(We hear the baying of hounds and the sound of excited voices.
BRODAS hurries off in that direction. The barking slowly
fades away and the forest sounds return. HARRIET slowly
emerges from where she has been hiding.)*

#3 The Promised Land

HARRIET

NO MORE WHIPPIN'S
NO MORE CHAINS
NO SIR!
NO MORE BEATIN'S
NO MORE PAINS
NO SIR!
NO MORE FEAR
NO MORE RAGE
NO MORE DOG
IN A CAGE
NO MORE MASTER
NO MORE SLAVE
NO SIR!

FOR WHERE I'M GOIN' I'LL BE FREE
I'M HEADED FOR THE LAND OF LIBERTY...

HARRIET (cont.)

EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD
 I WAS TOLD THE BIBLE STORY
 HOW THE HEBREWS DOWN IN EGYPT
 TOILED FOR PHAROH'S GLORY
 THEN GOD SENT THE PEOPLE MOSES
 MOSES TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
 AND LED THEM OUT OF SLAVERY
 INTO THE PROMISED LAND...

THE PROMISED LAND
 I'M BOUND FOR
 THE PROMISED LAND!
 THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY
 WHERE STREETS ARE PAVED WITH GOLD
 WHERE FREEDOM RINGS FROM ROOFTOPS
 AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I'M TOLD
 LIKE MOSES CROSSED THE DESERT
 AND WANDERED THROUGH THE SAND
 I WON'T GIVE IN
 UNTIL I'M IN

THE PROMISED LAND
 I'M BOUND FOR
 THE PROMISED LAND
 THE LAND OF DREAMS AND RAINBOWS
 AN EARTHLY PARADISE
 NO MATTER WHAT THE COST IS
 IT'S WORTH THE SACRIFICE
 I SEE A JUBILATION
 OH, WON'T IT ALL BE GRAND
 NO I CAN'T WAIT
 TO CELEBRATE
 THE PROMISED LAND...

GOODBYE HOME AND GOODBYE FAMILY
 LORD, IT BREAKS MY HEART TO LEAVE YOU
 THOUGH I'M GOIN' FAR AWAY
 PLEASE DON'T LET MY GOIN' GRIEVE YOU
 FOR NO MATTER WHAT THE DISTANCE
 YOU'LL BE WITH ME IN MY HEART
 I SWEAR TO YOU BY HEAVEN
 WE WON'T BE LONG APART

HARRET (cont.)

FOR I'LL COME BACK TO GET YOU
AND I'LL TAKE YOU BY THE HAND
AND WHEN I DO
I'LL LEAD YOU TO...

THE PROMISED LAND
I'M BOUND FOR
THE PROMISED LAND
THE LAND OF DREAMS AND RAINBOWS
AN EARTHLY PARADISE
NO MATTER WHAT THE COST IS
IT'S WORTH THE SACRIFICE
I SEE A JUBILATION
OH, WON'T IT ALL BE GRAND
NO I CAN'T WAIT
TO CELEBRATE
THE PROMISED LAND

(HARRIET runs off. Music continues as the scene shifts to the streets of Philadelphia, 1849. The TOWNSFOLK, including WILLIAM STILL and MARTHA enter pursuing their daily routines.)

#4 The City of Brotherly Love

TOWNSFOLK

WE'RE THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE
WELCOME TO PHILADELPHIA
WE HAVE RICH FOLK, WE HAVE POOR FOLK
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR MORE FOLK
IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

IF THE FUTURE IS WHAT YOU DREAM OF
DREAM BIG IN PHILADELPHIA
THERE'S NOT ANOTHER PLACE ON EARTH THAT
RANKS ABOVE
OUR DEAR CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

WE'RE THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE
SO COME TO PHILADELPHIA

TAILOR/MERCHANT

WE HAVE MERCHANTS, WE HAVE TAILORS

SAILOR
WE HAVE BIG AND BRAUNY SAILORS

SAILOR/MERCHANT/TAILOR
IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

(SOCIETY HILL LADY pulls on a pair of gloves.)

SOCIETY HILL LADY
LIKE YOUR FINGERS FIT INTO A GLOVE

SOCIETY HILL LADY/COP/GENTLEMAN
YOU'LL FIT IN PHILADELPHIA

WOMEN
WE'RE THAT SPECIAL SOMEPLACE THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS
DREAMING OF

TOWNSFOLK
WE'RE THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

(HARRIET enters and stares about in wonder.)

HARRIET
THE PROMISED LAND
PHILADELPHIA, BIG AND GRAND
HERE YOU ARE IN ALL YOUR GLORY
YET YOUR STREETS AREN'T PAVED WITH GOLD
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PARADISE
IN STORIES I WAS TOLD?
THERE IS NO MILK AND HONEY
THERE'S NO RAINBOW I CAN SEE
BUT HERE I AM
IN THE PROMISED LAND
HERE I'M FREE

(As the TOWNSFOLK sing, HARRIET goes from house to house looking for work. She sweeps a floor, shakes a rug, hangs some laundry – and is paid each time.)

TOWNSFOLK
WE'RE THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE
WELCOME TO PHILADELPHIA

BUTCHER

WE HAVE BUTCHERS...

BAKER

WE HAVE BAKERS...

PRIEST

WE HAVE CATHOLICS...

QUAKER WOMAN/QUAKER MAN

WE HAVE QUAKERS!

BUTCHER/BAKER/PRIEST/QUAKER WOMAN/QUAKER MAN
IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

COP

HUSTLE-BUSTLE, WE PUSH AND WE SHOVE
WE'RE BUSY PHILADELPHIA

TOWNSFOLK

THERE'S NOT ANOTHER PLACE ON EARTH THAT
RANKS ABOVE
OUR DEAR CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

(Special on HARRIET, counting her money, exuberant.)

HARRIET

THE PROMISED LAND
AT LONG LAST I UNDERSTAND
FOR NOW I LIVE IN FREEDOM
HERE HARD WORK EARNS A WAGE
HERE'S THE HEAVEN I'VE BEEN SEEKING
NO MASTER, NO MORE SLAVE

TOWNSFOLK

WE'RE THAT SPECIAL SOMEPLACE THAT
YOU'RE DREAMING OF
WE'RE THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

(A platform is rolled onstage bearing the Liberty Bell and a velvet rope partition to prevent tourists from touching it.)

TOWNSFOLK 1
 WE'RE THE CITY
 WHERE LIBERTY RINGS
 RING FREEDOM PHILADELPHIA!
 ALL THESE PEOPLE
 ALL THESE VOICES
 ALL HAVE CHANCES
 ALL HAVE CHOICES
 IN THE CITY

TOWNSFOLK 2
 WE'RE THE CITY
 WHERE LIBERTY RINGS
 PHILADELPHIA
 PEOPLE, VOICES
 CHANCES, CHOICES
 IN THE CITY

TOWNSFOLK
 WHERE LIBERTY RINGS
 ALL THE PROMISE THAT LIBERTY BRINGS
 RINGS TRUE IN PHILADELPHIA
 THAT SPECIAL SOMEPLACE THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS
 DREAMING OF
 WE'RE THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE
 THAT SPECIAL SOMEPLACE
 WE'RE THE CITY
 OF BROTHERLY LOVE

*(As the crowd disperses, HARRIET is looking the Liberty Bell.
 WILLIAM STILL notices her and approaches her.)*

It's really something, isn't it?

STILL

(HARRIET points to the inscription on the bell.)

What do them words say?

HARRIET

“Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all the inhabitants thereof.”

STILL

Proclaim liberty... sweet words.

HARRIET

STILL

The sweetest.

(He holds out his hand.)

William Still.

HARRIET

(Shaking his hand)

Harriet Tubman.

STILL

Harriet Tubman? Good God, woman! I've been looking for you since you ran away last year.

(HARRIET panics, and tries to pull her hand away.)

HARRIET

Let go!

STILL

Hold on, now! I just found you...

(HARRIET pulls away, grabbing the bag she carries over her shoulder.)

HARRIET

You stay back, y'hear me, Mister? I got a gun in this here bag. If you try to take my freedom from me, I'll shoot you with it.

STILL

I better start again. I'm William Still, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. I help runaway slaves escape. That's why I was looking for you. I got word that you were headed north. I figured it was only a matter of time until you showed up here.

HARRIET

What you mean you got word? Who told you 'bout me?

STILL

Various people. The Negro woman outside Camden who gave you food, the Quaker in Wilmington who gave you a new pair of shoes, that farmer who gave you a ride in his potato cart. Please, Harriet, don't be afraid. I'm not one of those turncoats who would betray a runaway for a few dollars. You can trust me. Besides, if anyone should be afraid, it's me. You're the one carrying the gun.

HARRIET

Now I just gotta figure out how to shoot it. It's nice to meet you, Mr. Still.

STILL

Please. Call me William.

HARRIET

All right, then – William. How long you been in the north?

STILL

All my life. My parents were escaped slaves who settled in in New Jersey.

HARRIET

So you was born a free man, like John.

STILL

John...?

HARRIET

My husband, John Tubman.

STILL

I didn't know you were married. Where is he? I'd like to meet him.

HARRIET

You can't – not yet, anyway. He still on the farm back home in Maryland.

STILL

You said he was free.

HARRIET

He is.

STILL

Then why didn't he come with you?

HARRIET

Didn't tell him I was leavin'. Didn't tell my mama or daddy, neither, nor any of my kin. I reckon they'd try and stop me. Besides, John didn't set much store by me bein' free.

STILL

Why not?

