

WHERE E'RE THE SUN

Written by

Dr. Andrew Yox, Allen Herald

Edited by

Hannah Goldblum, Monserrat Rivero,
Michelle Calderon, Raul Leija

Based on stories of Methodist traveling preachers of the early
19th century.

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ayox@ntcc.edu

3RD DRAFT

allen.herald10@gmail.com

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FM-1735, Mount Pleasant, TX 75455

903-305-0794

INT/EXT. SUNRISE

B-Roll of sunrise over hillside. In the still darkness of the lower screen the following words appear, to the accompaniment of the Isaac Watts Hymn below.

(TEXT ON SCREEN)

"His Kingdom Stretch from Shore to Shore: Till Moon shall Wax and Wane No More. Isaac Watts Hymn 1717"

FADE TO:

EXT. VICTORIAN HOME - DAY

Wide shot of Victorian home.

(TEXT ON SCREEN)

Breckenridge, Texas, 1885

FADE TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

DEBORAH sets the table.

DEBORAH

Kids! Food is ready!

Running is heard as PORTER, the oldest son of Deborah, and REBEKAH, the youngest daughter, scurry into the kitchen.

PORTER

Wow, Mom! Summer raspberry pudding,
my favorite!

REBEKAH

Yum!

Deborah begins to pour the pudding into their bowls as the two take their seats.

DEBORAH

It was your grandfather, James,
favorite as well.

PORTER

Mom, you sure did spend a lot of
time with grandfather before he
left us.

DEBORAH

Yes, Porter. And it was such a blessing. He told me a lot of stories that I had never known before. I had not realized how traveling preachers like himself had once taken such risks to bring the Gospel to Texas.

Deborah takes her seat at the table and takes a sip from a small coffee cup. Porter takes a few bites of his food, the table falls silent for a moment. Porter then jumps up, and hurries over to the bookcase, bringing back a small stack of books.

PORTER

Mom, why was his handwriting so small? I can barely see it.

Porter opens a book and places it on the table.

REBEKAH

It looks like he was writing for little fairies!

DEBORAH

The books are small because he had to fit them in what he called his "treasury department."

Just like in the story books we love to read, he had many adventures. Perhaps not with tiny fairies, but with people who were unchurched, living on the edge of civilization, on the frontier.

PORTER

You mean to say that grandad brought food, luggage, and the church, all on his back?

DEBORAH

It sounds impossible, but yes. And it was not just your grandad, James Porter Stevenson, but your great-grandad William Stevenson, James' Daddy, who did this.

Porter perks up from the books when hearing this.

PORTER

(excited)

Is that where I got my name?

DEBORAH

Yes, it is! And we got Rebekah's name from your great auntie Sarah Rebekah Robinson.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Back in those days, Texas was under Mexican control, and practicing any faith that wasn't strictly Roman Catholic was outlawed. Grandfather said that because of persecution, for a long while they couldn't organize a church. There used to be only two priests for the whole of Texas.

REBEKAH

So no-one in all of Texas was going to church on Sundays?

DEBORAH

It was worse than that. There were leaders of Texas at that time, men like Stephen F. Austin who wanted to keep religion out altogether!

Deborah takes a sip of coffee and sits back in her chair.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

A funny thing about it though, was that the fight to bring the church to Texas, according to your grandfather, actually began in Southeast Missouri. Before they came to Texas all the early traveling preachers of Texas were there, along with the man who wanted to get rid of them altogether, Stephen F. Austin. So that included Methodists like your kin, William and James Stevenson, and others like Henry Stevenson, and Joseph Bays, a Baptist.

PORTER

How did it all begin in Missouri?

DEBORAH

Well, your great grandfather, William, ran against the future Texas Impresario, Stephen F.

(MORE)

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Austin in the Missouri territorial
election of 1815.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. AUSTIN HOME - DAY

EMILY AUSTIN sits on a sofa, drinking tea. STEPHEN AUSTIN enters the room and takes a seat. He sighs and says nothing. Emily notices and shows a concerned look on her face.

EMILY
What troubles you, brother?

STEPHEN
Nothing out of the ordinary, just
drowning in debt and hoping for a
rope to be thrown to fish us all
out of it!

Emily sighs and recedes in her chair.

EMILY
I wish father had never gotten into
lead mining.

STEPHEN
Well there's certainly a lot of
dead lead here in Southeast
Missouri. If we could only get some
slaves, we could extract and ship
it. Bring up a coffee from New
Orleans. But they're expensive, and
we can't get our American
backcountry yahoos to work the
mines.

Stephen takes a sip of coffee

EMILY
I would love to have some octoroon
servants from New Orleans. I hear
they're great cooks!

Stephen looks admiringly at his sister.

STEPHEN
Emily, you deserve the best, father
knows it. He just can't seem to
deliver...

Stephen sighs and recedes in his chair.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Father still tells me the reason he's having me run for the territorial legislature is that we need all kinds of help from the federal government: Indian protection, dredging of the Mississippi, a bridge, roads, help for our bank. But I know, even with all that, we would be lucky to break even.

EMILY

Who are you going up against?

STEPHEN

One of those Methodist blood suckers, a guy named William Stevenson. You know, he's preached all over.

EMILY

Well he's probably aggravated people all over too.

STEPHEN

Emily, it's so strange. We live in a scientific age. We've had enlightened leaders like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Did you ever hear what Thomas Jefferson said to the French traveler who wondered why the churches in Virginia looked so dilapidated?

EMILY

No.

STEPHEN

He said, "what do you expect for someone who was born in a manger!"

EMILY

Oh, that's rich. I'll have to remember that.

STEPHEN

The point is, we are on the verge of a new age, and then a few years ago came this event at Cane Ridge, Kentucky;

(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
they had some kind of revival, and
people started acting strange, and
now we have this, out-of-control,
Methodist forest fire.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - DAY

WILLIAM STEVENSON and JANE STEVENSON are in their dining
room, sat at a table. William and Jane have COFFEE CUPS
before them.

JANE
After all this time, you'd think
I'd come to trust the boy.

William is slowly drinking coffee.

WILLIAM
Trust who? James?

JANE
Who else? He's been out preaching,
tending to the those in need for
two months now. Sometimes I wish he
had a little less of you in him,
and a little more of me...

Jane chokes up and pauses.

JANE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
I miss him.

William sets down his coffee and leans towards Jane, resting
his hand over hers.

WILLIAM
I know, I miss him too, a lot. But
the Lord has taken our soon and
done a great many good deeds with
his devotion. I consider ourselves
blessed to have a son such as
James.

Jane smiles while looking down at her coffee, she twirls a
small spoon in the deep brown brew.

JANE
I suppose we can't all get what we
want, can we now, darling?

WILLIAM

Well now, I suppose that's one way to look at it. Way I see it, once this is all said and done, we've got an eternity with our boy, Maw and Paw, and that sure is a lot longer than we ever get down here.

Jane looks up to William and smiles.

JANE

You always find a way to make me smile.

WILLIAM

(Chuckles and leans back in his chair)

I always try, darling.

There is a pause, William stares out the window for a moment.
CUT TO : White drapes flowing gently as the sun pours into the room.

CUT TO : William looking out the window.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I don't know how good my chances are at winning this race, Jane.

William turns to face Jane.

WILLIAM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

And to be honest, despite my feelings on the matter, it seems the Lord might see it fit that I lose.

Jane looks incredulously at William, scouring almost, sitting forward in her chair.

JANE

What the in the world would make you say that non-sense! Every Methodist around will be lining up to cast their vote with your name on the ballet!

William smiles at Jane, he pauses for a moment to think.

WILLIAM

Seems there's a lot of folk who don't see things the way we do, Jane.

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

And, while Austin may have some views that sour many, if not all the great citizens of Missouri, his reputation with the Dutch might be what wins it for him.

Jane scoffs, sits back in her chair.

JANE

I don't see what the Dutch got to do with it...

Jane sits forward in her chair.

JANE (CONT'D)

Stephen F. Austin is trynna bring in Slaves, William. That won't make it far round these parts.

William chuckles and takes a sip of his coffee.

WILLIAM

Jane, darlin', I know for a fact Austin has been writing every man in the state, informing them that I am in fact a diluted, religious fanatic. I know, because Paul Williams down the way got a letter himself. Now, you and I both know there's a great many good men who wouldn't believe those lies, but I can't shake hands with everyone in this state, and for all I know, it might be too late.

Jane recedes in her chair and looks away from William for a moment.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'm not sayin' it's a done deal, Jane. I'm just saying we should be prepared if things don't go our way, you understand?

JANE

I understand just fine, William. Just breaks my heart to hear you say it.

William stands up slowly, walks over to Jane. She stands and they embrace.

WILLIAM

(Quietly)

Eventually, this'll be nothing but a memory... I bet we'll even laugh about it, someday.

Jane chuckles as she holds onto William.

JANE

(Quietly)

I hope so, William.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE INNER SANCTUM (STEPHEN AUSTIN) - UNKNOWN

In total darkness, no sound is heard. The loud CLICK of a stage light turning on is heard. All that is seen is Stephen Austin, the space around him is totally black. His arms outstretched.

STEPHEN AUSTIN

My friends, we need a bridge.

He takes a pause.

STEPHEN AUSTIN (CONT'D)

We need connection. Turnpikes in Missouri. Actual federal protection from the savages! The war with Britain may be over in the East, but those Sauk Indians north of us, they don't know that. They have painted their faces red! Are the authorities blind?

STEPHEN AUSTIN (CONT'D)

We can get help if you will elect me to the territorial legislature! My opponent, the Reverend Parson, William Stevenson, doesn't like the idea of these improvements. Parson Stevenson is standing up for the rights of squatters, slaves, and even injins! And do you know, he is even talking about a law for temperance? Give him a chance at office, and he might outlaw dancing! Should we let him stifle our trade, and settlements so he can live out his personal religious preferences?

There is no sound, camera is now handheld, with a fair amount of shake. Stephen Austin smiles then bows.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. WOODS MONTAGE - BAYS BATTLE SCENE - DAY

RAPID CUT : Joseph running between trees in a densely wooded forest.

RAPID CUT : Native American running between the trees.

CUT : Joseph stops, looks around, no sound. Suddenly, the Native American runs down a hill. Joseph runs after him, he gets to the edge of the hill, the ground drops into a creek.

CUT : Camera looking up at Joseph, he slides down into the creek. He pulls a large knife and begins to walk towards the camera.

CUT : Joseph looks around intently, walking slowly and listening.

CUT : The Native American GRUNTS and hits Joseph in the back with the butt of his musket, Joseph falls and drops his knife. The Native pulls a hatchet out and swings for Joseph as he rolls over.

CUT : Joseph rolls out of the way, grabs his knife, and kicks the legs out from under the Native American.

CUT : Joseph holds the knife up, as he prepares to plunge the knife, he realizes the Native American is a woman. She breathes heavily and looks intently at Joseph.

CUT: Joseph slowly lowers the blade and backs away. The woman continues to stare intently at Joseph. A tear begins to stream down her cheek.

CUT: Joseph continues to walk back slowly, eventually he turns and jogs away.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Sat beside a campfire in the woods, Joseph Bays smokes a pipe while reading a book. COMMANDER SMITH approaches him.

COMMANDER SMITH

What happened to you back there,
Mr. Bays? I thought we lost you for
sure.

JOSEPH BAYS

Well sir, I thought I had em', I
was certain! But the sneaky bastard
slipped right from my grasp.

COMMANDER SMITH

That's a damn shame, son. Guess
we're lucky, glad we didn't lose a
good man such as yourself, uh...

JOSEPH BAYS

Joseph... Joseph Bays.

COMMANDER SMITH

Ah, yes, Joseph.

Commander Smith takes a seat by Joseph, taking notice of the
book on his lap.

COMMANDER SMITH (CONT'D)

What're you reading, son?

JOSEPH BAYS

The Good Book, sir. Gods Word.

COMMANDER SMITH

(Chuckles)

Didn't take you for the religious
type... or the reading type,
neither.

JOSEPH BAYS

Well sir, before the war I was a
preacher, and when we get finished
up here I'll be back at it.

COMMANDER SMITH

Well, damn son! Suppose I read you
wrong all along. Just figured you
were uptight, didn't know you had a
reason.

Joseph chuckles and smiles, looking down for a moment.

COMMANDER SMITH (CONT'D)

Is that why I seen ya kneeling by
the bodies after some of our
battles? You praying to God?

JOSEPH BAYS

Yessir, and to tell you the truth,
I'm always praying for forgiveness.
I know that God would just assume
we would not kill.

COMMANDER SMITH

But we usually do a thorough job of
it. Now, surely it ain't a sin to
protect your people, ain't it
preacher man?

JOSEPH BAYS

Well Jesus loved the faith of the
centurion, and he was a soldier.
And God loved the works of another
commander, Cornelius. I reckon we
have to defend ourselves, but
that's not up to us, only God can
judge man, and I pray he forgives
all our sins and transgressions
against him.

COMMANDER SMITH

I guess I never thought of it like
that...

Commander Smith looks into the fire and pauses.

COMMANDER SMITH (CONT'D)

Now, isn't that preacher who's
running for Congress, from
Bellevue, uh... William Stevenson.
Isn't he trying to make peace with
the Sauk?

JOSEPH BAYS

Well sir, the Methodists are all
heart, but they don't always think
things through.

Commander Smith laughs and stands.

COMMANDER SMITH

Good luck on your reading, son.

Commander Smith pats Josephs shoulder as he walks by. Joseph
lifts his pipe as he nods, then returns to his book.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

Joseph is seen sitting against a large tree, ROSENIA is seen entering the frame far away from the tree. Joseph notices, he stands and calls out to her.

JOSEPH
Rosenia, over here!

ROSENIA
Joseph!

JOSEPH
Do you think your brothers are following you? How much time do you think you have?

ROSENIA
Time is running out. I think father may move us any day now.

JOSEPH
Never can keep a good man down, I suppose.

Rosenia giggles, she sighs, and looks deeply into Joseph's eyes.

ROSENIA
You know it was kind of risky leaving that letter of yours so conspicuous, hanging out of that hollow of that big oak.

JOSEPH
I didn't want you to miss it!

Joseph grabs her hand tightly.

ROSENIA
Well now we're all alone, and you were going to say something to me?

Joseph hesitates for a moment, then he gets on one knee.

JOSEPH
Rosenia... I want you to be my wife!

ROSENIA
Joseph, my father would like you a lot better if you weren't such a cold-water Baptist. He thinks everyone is saved.

Joseph, clearly upset, stands.

JOSEPH

Rosenia, the Good Book says that only he who believes and is baptized will be saved. One must be born again. And that means not everyone is saved. And you will be baptized again, in a full, and God-fearing way, won't yah?

ROSENIA

Joseph, pray for me, because I'm not sure right now. But you know I will if...

JOSEPH

It's now or never, Rosenia.

An UNKNOWN WOMAN's voice is heard from far away.

UNKNOWN WOMAN

Rosenia, Rosenia, where are you?

ROSENIA

I... I'm sorry, I have to go!

Rosenia begins to walk away, Joseph grabs her hand tightly.

JOSEPH

Rosenia! Please... tell me...

ROSENIA

Tell you what? You tell me.

JOSEPH

Please be my wife!

ROSENIA

Find a minister quickly who will do the ceremony, and I will be your wife.

Joseph and Rosenia embrace.

UNKNOWN WOMAN

Rosenia! Where are you!

Rosenia runs away, Bays returns to his stump smiling. He sits down and begins to pray. FADE TO BLACK.

INT. AUSTIN HOME - DAY

Emily sits on a sofa, she is reading a book. Stephen enters the room.

STEPHEN

And what is my dear sister reading today?

EMILY

Clarissa, by Samuel Richardson. I am re-reading volume one because we do not have a bank with notes trusted out East for volume two.

STEPHEN

And what are you getting out of it?

EMILY

There's a lot one can take away, the ways families become tyrannical, the need for youth to try anew, and the quest for a virtuous life when circumstances are... confining.

STEPHEN

Well, I won the election!

Emily puts her book to the side and hugs Stephen.

EMILY

Oh, brother! Congratulations!

Stephen pulls back after a moment and begins to proclaim.

STEPHEN

I'm going to go to work immediately to try to get a charter for the Bank of St. Louis, which Dad and his friends have been working on for two years now. Once we can get some real credit around here, Emily, you'll be able to buy volume two.

EMILY

Laughing.

And how about volumes two through four, this novel is a monster!

INT. STEPHENSON'S M.O. HOME - NIGHT

Inside a modest dwelling, RUTH STEPHENSON tends to a fire burning. She places a small log in the fire and stares deeply into the flames. She sighs and walks to small crib, she smiles and she caresses the head of her baby.

Just then, a LOUD NOISE is heard from outside the home. Ruth SHOOTs UP, stares intensely at the door. Camera shows the door as more sounds are heard, FOOTSTEPS.

Ruth rushes over to the other side of the room. She opens a box and removes a cloth, under it, a large bladed knife.

Closeup of the blade in Ruth's hand as the light from the fire glimmers on the cold steel. Wide shot of Ruth as she stares at the door, shaking slightly.

The door SLOWLY OPENS, out of focus, a figure stands in the house. Ruth Stephenson drops the knife and begins to cry.

RUTH

Henry!

Ruth Stephenson rushes over to HENRY STEPHENSON, she hugs him, still crying.

HENRY

Ruth, darling...

Henry holds Ruth tightly.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What on earth were you doing with that blade?

Ruth Stephenson stands back.

RUTH

I thought you might be a bandit, or some drunken stranger.

Ruth Stephenson walks towards the fire and pulls up two chairs.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Please, sit down, you must be exhausted.

Henry heads for the chair and takes a seat.

HENRY

That... (Grunts) That I am.

Ruth takes a seat by Henry, she smiles admiringly at him.

HENRY STEPHENSON

I'm certain you have many questions, but we have guests arriving soon, dear.

Ruth looks surprised.

RUTH

At this hour? Goodness! Who might it be? And please tell me at least if the conference went well.

Henry leans back in his chair.

HENRY

It was wonderful, we are blessed by many Godly people in Missouri. Would you fetch me some water, dear?

Ruth stands quickly and exits frame.

RUTH

Of course!

Henry stands slowly, and walks towards the crib. He smiles and gently places his hand on his child.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Henry, you still haven't told me who we are expecting?

Henry turns back and walks towards the fire.

HENRY

The Stevensons, William and his eldest son James.

Henry takes his seat by the fire and leans back.

HENRY (CONT'D)

They haven't told me a great many details, but I know this is their first stop on a long journey.

Ruth returns to Henry with water and takes her seat.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He takes a drink.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Do we have any provisions to spare?
Perhaps barley coffee? Or honey and
pecans?

RUTH

Well, I was saving those treats for
your birthday, but if you deem it
worthy I say we can spare it.

HENRY

For our brothers in Christ?

Ruth smiles back at her husband.

RUTH

Of course dear.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DIRT PATH - EARLY MORNING

On a path in the woods, WILLIAM STEVENSON and his son, JAMES STEVENSON walk side by side carrying sacks over their shoulders.

JAMES

Father, I'm concerned. What will
happen to the church once we leave?

WILLIAM

It's hard to say, but we must have
faith, son. The Lord calls us to
preach, James, and where we're
headed, they sure need it.

JAMES

I know the Lord is with us, and his
will prevails over all else, but I
fear for our safety.

William stops, James does as well. William places his hand on James's shoulder.

WILLIAM

You know the word of the Lord and
you speak truth, my son. Allow the
truth to soak, and ease your
worried mind.

James smiles at his father, and they begin to walk again.

JAMES

Thank you.

They continue to walk.

FADE OUT.

EXT. STEPHENSONS M.O. LAND - DAY

William and James approach the home of Henry and Ruth. They reach the door and KNOCK.

JAMES

I hope it's not too early.

WILLIAM

It is, but they'll understand.

The door opens, Henry stands before them, smiling.

HENRY

William, James, so good to see you
two again. Please, come inside.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHENSONS M.O. HOME - DAY

Henry enters the house, he gives way to William and James, they enter slowly, all smiles. Ruth approaches the men.

HENRY

Ruth, this is William and James
Stevenson... Stevenson with a "V"

Ruth giggles and gently shakes both William and James' hands.

RUTH

It's a pleasure to meet you both.
I'm Ruth Stephenson... with a "PH"

William and James laugh and smile.

WILLIAM

It's a pleasure, ma'am.

JAMES

Wonderful to meet you, ma'am. Thank
you for having us in your home.

RUTH

Well, you two are always welcome here. Henry was telling me all that you two have done for the church. It's an honor to have you both.

WILLIAM STEVENSON

Thank you, Ruth, for welcoming us into your home, and for your kind words.

RUTH

Of course! Please...

Ruth walks towards the chairs in the living area.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Take a seat!

She gestures towards the chair.

William and James take their seats as Henry and Ruth do the same.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Are you two in need of anything? Water, food?

WILLIAM

Oh, no ma'am. We are well, thank you. Henry, I want to thank you for offering us provisions for our journey, your kindness is deeply appreciated.

JAMES

Thank you, Mr. Stephenson. We cannot thank you enough.

Henry Stephenson chuckles and leans back in his chair.

HENRY

Please, James, call me Henry.

James smiles. Henry reaches for his pipe, on a small stool beside his chair. He opens a small sack, and begins to place tobacco in his pipe.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, do share, what is this journey I've heard so little of?

Henry lights his pipe and takes a few puffs.

WILLIAM

Well Henry, I'll be direct. James and I are on our way to Texas.

Henry is visibly surprised.

HENRY

Well, now, William, I know the election was a hard fought battle, but running off to Texas seems like a good way to end up killed.

William takes pause.

WILLIAM

Texas has it's fair share of danger, but, I'll tell ya, the Lord's calling us. There's lot's of folk down there, but not a one church between em'. The way I see it, for as much as the church may need myself and James here, those who haven't a house of the Lord within a two weeks walk are in greater need of the his teachings.

Henry pauses, takes a few puffs off his pipe.

HENRY

William, you know preaching is outlawed down there. It's Roman Catholic territory. If you don't run into some bloodthirsty thieves you may just end up in Stephen Austin's hands. And I can't be sure which is worse.

RUTH

I agree with Henry, are you not concerned with Stephen Austin's hatred for preaching?

WILLIAM

I am, but I know the Lord is with us, and his will prevails.

There is a pause.

HENRY

James... What do you make of all this?

JAMES

Well, politics was never my place,
but I do know right from wrong.
And, what Mr. Austin is doing is
plain wrong. But I trust my father,
and above all I trust the Lord.
There's good people in Texas, they
just need to hear his word.

There is another pause. Henry has a contemplative look on his face.

HENRY

If I know you as well as I think I
do, William, I know there's no
changing your mind, no matter how I
plead with you. But, I have to ask,
if you do run into danger, are you
prepared?

WILLIAM

Yes, we both are.

HENRY

Well, alright then. Do you two need
a place to rest before you
continue? You're more than welcome
to stay here as long as you need.

WILLIAM

Thank you, Henry, but the paths
these days seem plenty safe at
night, and James and I have roughed
it many times before. Since the
smallpox and the war wiped out most
any ingins left in these parts, we
haven't much to worry about for a
good little while. Just a few
bobcats, and wild boar, but we can
handle them just fine.

HENRY

I understand, I suppose I'm glad to
hear the roads are safer, just a
shame what happened to those
ingins. I don't believe in all this
waring over the lands, it's not
what Christ would have wanted.

James sits forward in his chair.

JAMES

Even after all they've done to us white folk, you still see it that way?

HENRY

Yes, I do. The Lord instructed us to turn the other cheek, and I don't see much from this government other than revenge and killing.

James says nothing, he sits back in his chair with a thoughtful look.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Dear, would you grab their supplies?

RUTH

Of course.

Ruth stands and walks out of frame.

HENRY

We've gathered what we could. It's not much, but it should help hold you over for a little while.

WILLIAM

Thank you, thank you both. James and I are truly blessed to have met you Henry.

HENRY

I had a feeling when we met that Ruth and I could be of service to you two, the Lord put us at that convention for a reason, my friends.

The men all stand as Ruth Stephenson re-enters the room.

RUTH

Please, be safe.

She hands the supplies in a medium sized sack to William.

WILLIAM

Thank you, Ruth.

EXT. STEPHENSON'S M.O. HOUSE - DAY

James exits the house, followed by William and Henry. James begins to walk away, but Henry gently grabs William and pulls him aside.

HENRY

William... are you certain about this? There's no telling what sort of misadventure this could turn out to be.

WILLIAM

There's few things in my life I've been more certain of. These people must hear the word of God.

James notices that Henry and William have stopped. He looks around, then finds a stump to sit on.

HENRY

(Sigh)

You and I are both getting old, William, but if you have a conviction that the Lord is calling you, then I'll always be here to help.

William smiles at Henry.

WILLIAM

Thank you. Perhaps someday you can join us, down in Texas, sharing the Gospel.

Henry laughs lightly.

HENRY

Perhaps, but I'll have to convince Ruth first.

WILLIAM

I'm sure she'd come around, once James and I clear out the thieves and Bobcats!

Henry laughs.

HENRY

Godspeed, my friend.

William shakes Henry's hand and smiles.

James stands as William begins to walk towards him.

INT. AUSTIN'S HOME

Emily, Rosenia, and Joseph Bays are seated around a table. Stephen enters the room at takes a seat.

STEPHEN

We are so pleased to have you two over. Joseph, you are our hero from the battle of the Sink Hole, teaching those Sauk a lesson they won't soon forget! We appreciate your purchase of the Barnstable property. And, if that's not all, I appreciate your vote in the last election. Well, Jimmy's made a hearty meal today, let's commence so we'll have time to enjoy it!

JOSEPH

Wait, shouldn't we ask for the blessing of the Almighty first?

EMILY

(Incredulous)

Well, Mr. Bays, that would be just wonderful.

JOSEPH

O Christ, you who fed the five thousand, and the four thousand. You who provide food to all the flesh, to the beasts, and to the young ravens who cry, we thank you for these rich provisions at a time of thin harvests. Bless our comings and goings, may we do everything in your name, O Jesus, Amen.

STEPHEN

Well said, my friend. You remind me of one of my Transylvania college friends. Where did you receive your education.

JOSEPH

I study at the academy of the Holy Spirit. I read Scripture. I fumble through it. And each day God helps me to understand a little more.

STEPHEN

Well... I hope you master it soon so maybe you can go on to other things!

Stephen Laughs. A nervous silence follows.

ROSENIA

Emily, I was wondering, how did you
get this table cloth so, white?

Emily, with a look of subtle distain, turns to Rosenia.

EMILY

Well you've got to get maids who
know how to soak, scorch, and
starch correctly.

ROSENIA

But what do they soak it with?

Emily looks away, turns to Joseph. She laughs almost
mockingly.

EMILY

Oh, how should I know?

EMILY (CONT'D)

But I do know that your husband,
Joseph, is a hero... I would like
to thank you personally, Joseph,
for protecting us from those
savages. I've always admired
fearless men!

Rosenia turns away from Rosenia, a look of disgust on her
face. Joseph laughs uncomfortably, turns to Stephen.

JOSEPH

Mr. Austin, how is the lead mining
going these days?

STEPHEN

Well Joseph, you would have thought
the war would have made us rich.
But trade declined with the Indian
troubles. My Daddy and I are
thinking more and more about land,
and its value now that the war is
over.

JOSEPH

Where are you thinking of
speculating?

STEPHEN

Well it's no longer "Go West Young
Man" as they say. West means the
Ozarks and a lot of bad, dry land.

(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

We need to say, "Go South young man!" I'm of a mind Arkansas along the Mississippi, and Arkansas Rivers is going to make some really rich cotton country.

Stephen sips his wine.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Of course, my father, Moses, has this really cockeyed idea to go even further south. That Texas is the place to go, that somehow the Spanish authorities down there, if there is any authority that is, might lease a large area of the place to American Catholics who would agree to be the part of New Spain.

Joseph and Rosenia gaze at Austin with wonder.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. VICTORIAN HOME - DAY

Porter and Rebekah watch Deborah in suspense. Porter speaks up.

PORTER

(Excited)

Hold on Mom, so your Grandpa lost the Missouri election to Stephen Austin, so the whole group began to move south?

DEBORAH

Yes honey. People in that time liked to make big returns on small investments. They'll even take major risks. After Missouri was organized, the path to cheap land for cotton farmers turned south, first to Arkansas, then to Western Louisiana and then to Texas. Naturally, the traveling preachers, versed in the ways of these frontier people followed.

REBEKAH

Wow, so your dad then preached in Arkansas before he moved to Texas?!?!?

DEBORAH

Oh yes, but under the direction of his dad, William Stevenson.

REBEKAH

Great-grandpa!!!

DEBORAH

Uh huh! He is known as the first traveling preacher to reach both Arkansas and Texas.

PORTER

Wow! What was it like when the Traveling Preachers entered the frontier?

DEBORAH

Well let me tell you the story of your Great Granddad, William, when he first entered Texas in 1817. This was at a place called Pecan Point in the northeast part of Texas, just South of the Red River. This was an amazing trip. The Austin's were at this time still in Arkansas and Missouri. The land was wild. The grass was sometimes so high it was up to the horse's withers, and the streams so swollen, that they would have to hug their horses, while letting them swim across. The kind of people that were on the frontier at the time included many who had fled the civilization, criminals on the lam, and people who were simply squatting on the land they didn't own.

EXT. GRASSY FIELDS - DAY

William and James trek across an open field, the sun bearing down on them. James stops to take a breath. William takes notice, he stops and places a hand on James.

JAMES

I'm alright, I just need to catch my breath. It's so hot.

William reaches into his bag, he retrieves a canteen, and hands it to James.

WILLIAM
Drink, please.

James drinks, but after a moment he realizes it's empty. He looks to William, concerned.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
It's alright, son. Let's find a place to stop for a little while.

JAMES
Alright.

William and James walk slowly across the fields.

FADE TO:

EXT. TREE IN A FIELD - DAY

William and James approach a tree in a field. William helps James lie down against the tree.

JAMES
I feel faint, I'm not sure how much more I can walk.

William stands before James, he looks around for a moment.

WILLIAM
Well son, I think this will do for now. I'll take a look around, try and find some more water for us.

William continues to look around, his breathing is heavier.

JAMES
Are you sure, father? You sound faint yourself.

WILLIAM
I'm right as rain, son. Don't you worry yourself about me, I've had my fair share of hot summers. Just stay here, I'll be back before nightfall.

JAMES
And if you're not.

WILLIAM
Keep your iron close.

MUSIC swells as the camera CROSSFADES to a WIDE-SHOT of the Tree, William is seen walking away as James relaxes.

FADE TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

William walks through the woods, eventually reaching a downed tree limb. He sets his bag down, and takes a rest. He falls asleep.

FADE TO:

EXT. SCENERY MONTAGE - DAY

A series of shots of nature.

Trees swaying in the wind.

Birds singing as the clouds roll.

CLOSE-UP of still grass.

MID-SHOT of a stream. Hold shot.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - LATER

William wakes up. He stands up from the fallen branch. CLOSE-UP from below as William looks around. He stands and walks deeper into the woods.

EXT. DEEPER INTO THE WOODS - LATER

A series of shots of William walking through the woods.

WIDE-SHOT of William walking through the woods.

CLOSE-UP of William from low, he walks past the camera and stops, then walks out of frame.

WIDE-SHOT of William slowly walking into a creek-bed.

William fills up the Canteen.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

A MYSTERIOUS MAN, Red hair, tall, approaches the fallen branch where William left his bag. The Mysterious man begins to search through Williams bag.

As the man searches through the bag, William approaches. The Mysterious man does not notice him.

WILLIAM

What do you think you're doing, son?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

And who the hell are you?

WILLIAM

Well, my name's William Stevenson, and I'm a traveling preacher. And since you so willingly helped yourself to that bag, maybe you can help me. I'm looking for a little settlement, called Pecan Point, little across that Spanish Line?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Oh! A traveling preacher. You know damn well it's illegal to cross that line.

WILLIAM

It would be illegal for me NOT to cross that line! In the Good Book it says NOT to obey the laws of man, but those of GOD!

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(Mocking)

You ain't a preacher, you're a damn smuggler.

WILLIAM

You calling me a liar, son?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

I ain't calling you for dinner! Matter of fact...

The Mysterious Man leans over and picks up William's bag.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (CONT'D)

I'm turning you in!

William raises his walking stick.

WILLIAM

You will do no such thing!

William swings the stick, the Mysterious man evades his swing and runs away, William follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. TREE IN A FIELD - NIGHT

James lies under the Tree, he is sleeping.

Hold shot, James continues to sleep.

GROWLING is heard, James wakes up abruptly. He looks around for a moment, he begins to look around. GROWLING gets louder, more aggressive. James looks up into the Tree.

CUT TO a large Bobcat in the Tree, looking down at James, Growling.

James slowly moves for his bag, the growling becomes VERY LOUD. James scrambles for his bag, and frantically digs through it. A loud SCREECH is heard, James acts even more frantically.

BANG! A light FLASHES the screen, James jolts. The sound of the growling and screeching stops, a faint sound of running is heard.

James looks past the camera, a warm light shines on him, the sound of FOOTSTEPS are heard.

JAMES

Dad! Thank God! I thought I was a goner!

William approaches James.

WILLIAM

Son, you God has his eye on you!
That Bobcat had you right where he wanted ya!

William sets his lantern down and sits by James.

JAMES

Thank you, you saved my life.

WILLIAM

You were right to thank God, I'm just his helper. And so are you.

James smiles and pauses for a moment.

JAMES
Did you find water.

WILLIAM
Right!

William reaches into his bag and retrieves the canteen.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Found a nice, clear stream.

James grabs the canteen.

JAMES
Thank you!

James takes a drink from the canteen.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I suppose we're staying here for
the night.

WILLIAM
You tell me! Looks like you've
already set up camp.

James laughs.

JAMES
That's one way of putting it.

CUT TO:

EXT. TREE IN A FIELD - MORNING

William opens a small sack, retrieves raisins and eats them.
James takes a small coffee pot off a small fire and pours
coffee into two mugs. James hands William a mug.

WILLIAM
Thank you... I reckon we're not too
far from Pecan Point. That feller I
chased off yesterday made me think
it's within the days walk from
here.

JAMES
Good, that's good. But you don't
know where it is exactly.

William sips his coffee, James does the same.

WILLIAM

I don't. But once we hit the Red River I know we're close.

JAMES

Which way you think we should go?

WILLIAM

Can't be sure. I'm thinking maybe we should split, I can down river, you go up, try and find those folks.

JAMES

Alright. But what do we do if we don't find it?

WILLIAM

We'll mark our spot, we meet back there within two days if we don't find anything. Now, if we do find something, we still meet back there, then head on back to Pecan Point.

James looks out to the horizon.

JAMES

Alright. Just be careful, there's some nasty folks out here.

WILLIAM

And nasty cats, too.

James laughs, William follows.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

The Lord is with us son, we will prevail.

JAMES

Amen.

William stands and begins to place his things in his sack. James begins to put out the fire.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BAYS HOME - DAY

Inside the Bays home, Joseph inspects a small bag of seeds while standing.

JOSEPH

Rosenia, I am so sorry. I really thought at least one merchant in town a town like Natchitoches would have some cheaper flour, but seems like in these parts, all they grow is cotton. These people will imperil their own health if they continue like this.

Rosenia is sitting, drinking tea and inspecting a small sack.

ROSENIA

So you bought seed, molasses, some cloth, paper and bullets?

Joseph pauses and looks down.

JOSEPH

Yes, that's about it, except for this.

Joseph pulls a letter from his pocket. He hands it to Rosenia.

ROSENIA

Oh, I hoped it would be from home.

Rosenia hands the letter back, visibly disinterested, she returns to the small sack.

JOSEPH

It's from Stephen Austin. He appears to have been dragged through the brier patch. His father passed off his Potosi Missouri mine to him, and that failed. The Austin family's bank of St. Louis has just failed. Stephen had moved to Arkansas, where he lost land, a judgeship and an election, and now he is in New Orleans.

ROSENIA

What inspires this sudden confidence in you? Does he have no-one else to weep to?

Rosenia looks up from the sack, directly at Joseph.

ROSENIA (CONT'D)

He's not interested in faith, is he?

JOSEPH

No, not as far as I can tell. He's asking for my help. His father, Moses Austin, has ventured into Texas, as promised, and he is currently bedridden at the home of Hugh McGuffin of Camp Sabine, just on the Louisiana side of the border. Stephen warns me he's very sick, and has asked me to visit with him, to see if his health has improved or worsened.

Rosenia looks elsewhere, a CUP OF TEA before her, she takes a sip.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Can you imagine a sixty year old man, living off nothing but roots and berries for weeks and weeks in East Texas? The kind of humid cold weather we've had recently, I can't imagine his health is be in good order.

Rosenia turns her attention back to Joseph.

ROSENIA

Why doesn't he check on him?

JOSEPH

I wonder that myself.

Joseph takes a seat by Rosenia.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I suppose it's political, as everything is with him.

ROSENIA

That is exactly what worries me.

JOSEPH

I wonder if God has a task for me, perhaps he hopes for me to use this as an opportunity to share the good word.

ROSENIA

But what is it in for Austin? Other than the obvious.

JOSEPH

I'm not sure.

There is a long pause.

ROSENIA

I don't trust him. Or his father.

JOSEPH

I can't be sure if I do either.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE INNER SANCTUM (WILLIAM STEVENON) - UNKNOWN

Williams enters frame from complete darkness. He coughs and LIGHTS go up.

WILLIAM

Settlers of Pecan Point. I want to thank the Edmonson family for taking me in last night, and telling the rest of you about our meeting this morning.

You people here are brave. You've gone out ahead of your nation, into a wilderness that is unoccupied, and waiting for civilization and the church to come to it.

And as I come here with my Bible, across the great Red River into this land of Texas, I think history is being made, and We are making it.

You went out with the hope that the Bible, and law and order would catch up.

I don't think for a moment, considering some of my experiences in getting here that law and order is catching up.

But I do think that God has caught up, and right now at this moment He is overtaking you with His blessing, so great That the floodgates cannot keep it back.

It is a blessing of love.

To take your burden,

That bundle that is weighing you down, down, down

Getting louder and faster

Taking you down the hill

Causing you to stumble

Making you fall

Amen, brother, Amen. . . Brothers and Sisters

God is coming to you, through Jesus Christ who died to take your burden.

So that you would give the burden up.

Amen,

Amen.

Amen.

Give the Burden up!

I had a burden.

When I was livin' in Kaintuck.

I was living a wild and wicked life.

I didn't have a conscience of a clear heart

I was more anxious to play than pray

But God found me and my burden

And he took it away.

Praise God, Praise God!

He found me and my burden, and he took it away.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Is fear taking you down?

Are the beasts, and fever taking you down.

Is the anger of others taking you down?

Is the bottle taking you down?

Is another man's wife taking you down?

Down, Down, Down?

No. No!

Hell is down. The flames are down. Torment is down.

Down, Down, Down.

Stop where you are!

Don't fall into fire!

For Hope is here now. God is here. He is offering forgiveness. For those who will give their burden to him. To take away their sins.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Praise God!

He is here for you!

And you need only drop your burden, and fold your hands.

For God will answer the prayers of those who trust in Him!

Alleluia!

INT. MCGUFFIN HOUSE - NIGHT

Inside a dark, damp house, Joseph stands with HUGH MCGUFFIN, a stocky, bearded man, no younger than thirty five. They are illuminated by candle light.

HUGH

Thank you again for the garlic and peppers, Mr. Bays, your generosity will be remembered.

JOSEPH

I thank you for welcoming me into your home. May I speak to Moses?

HUGH

Of course.

The two men walk towards the camera, FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN, MOSES AUSTIN, an old, frail, bearded man lies in bed, eyes closed. Joseph approaches.

JOSEPH

Mr. Austin, my name is Joseph Bays. Your son, Stephen, has asked me to visit you.

Moses eyes open slowly and he stares at Joseph for a long time without saying a word.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Your son, Stephen has asked that I visit, to see what health you might be in... and if there is anything I can do for you.

Moses continues to stare at Joseph.

MOSES

Are you a medicine man?

JOSEPH

No sir. I'm a preacher, Baptist.

Moses face turns more sour.

MOSES

What the hell could you possibly do for me, preacher man?

Joseph notices a chair nearby, he pulls it to the edge of the bed and takes a seat.

JOSEPH

Well sir, I brough provisions for you and Mr. McGuffin, as well as herbs to help with your possible ailments.

Moses chuckles.

MOSES

That boy was always useless... can't tell a doctor from a preacher.

There is a pause.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Tell... (cough) tell Stephen I'm fine. I have a business venture in Missouri to attend to in short order.

Joseph has a concerned look on his face.

JOSEPH

Mr. Austin, forgive my honesty, but you're in no state to travel.

Moses laughs, mockingly.

MOSES

And you're in no state to give orders, preacher man! (cough)

There is another pause. Moses looks away from Joseph.

JOSEPH

Be that as it may, you're an intelligent man, with good instinct. And I believe you know as well as I do that traveling in your health is a Deathwish.

Moses chuckles.

MOSES

I see why Stephen has asked you to visit me... as one last insult to torment his father in his time of weakness. A preacher man, giving me orders, mocking me openly. That boy never knew respect.

Joseph pauses, looks to the floor, then to Moses.

JOSEPH

May I pray with you, Mr. Austin?

Moses slowly looks to Joseph, glaring.

MOSES

Now why in the hell would I want to do that?

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. RED RIVER - DAY

William rests by the River, reading an old book. James approaches after a short time.

JAMES

Dad!

William lowers his book and looks around. He spots James, and stands quickly.

WILLIAM

James!

James rushes towards William, who walks in his direction.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

James! Oh, James! I'm so glad you are well!

William and James hug.

JAMES

Did you find Pecan Point? Is it real?

WILLIAM

Yes my son! Yes, indeed! It was glorious! Simply glorious!

JAMES

God be praised!

WILLIAM

Amen! Amen! Son, I am joyful to inform you in my short time at Pecan Point, three men have agreed to meet regularly and discuss the Bible!

JAMES

Father! That is wonderful! The Lord is with us!

WILLIAM

That he is son. That he is. Come, sit with me and rest for awhile, I'll tell you the story.

The two walk out of frame in the direction where William was sitting before.

EXT. WOODS - LATER THAT NIGHT

Shots of...

The Moon bright in the night sky.

Silhouetted trees in the darkness.

Stars in the night sky.

All the while, CRICKETS and OWLS are heard.

James and William sit on a wooden bench, by a fire.

JAMES PORTER

To think that a Bible Society is in Spanish Texas! That is wonderful, Dad, and you didn't run into any trouble crossing the border?

WILLIAM

Well the Civil War in New Spain seems to be leading to disarray alright. James, I've noted this before, when you go out to the frontier's farthest limits, the dangers seem to multiply. I very nearly lost my horse, and everything I had. When there are no laws, there is a new law, and that is "everyone for himself." In that kind of world, I wonder if by being there I wasn't just bloating out my chest like some Frigatebird. Can we even act like Christians in that kind of place?

JAMES

Yes, yes we can.

WILLIAM

Of course we can, of course.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE INNER SANCTUM (JOSEPH) - UNKNOWN

Joseph reads aloud a letter while pacing.

JOSEPH

Dear Mr. Austin: I have visited with your father. He seems full of spark to complete his dealings in Spanish Texas. Mr. McGuffin has a solid home and a good bed. I believe this son of Old Erin is resourceful, and I believe your slave, Richmond, loyal. He is doing double duty, both helping Mr. McGuffin, and nursing your father. Despite your father's fixed objectives, he appears to have been confined to his bed for some time. He has a dry cough, a very pallid complexion, and lips that appear to have lost their redness. I warned him strenuously not to return to Missouri until he had fully recovered.

INT. VICTORIAN HOME - LATER

Porter chimes in again.

PORTER

So what happened to Moses Austin?
Did Stephen ever visit him?

DEBORAH

No... Actually Moses died when he got back to Missouri, and according to your grandfather who knew Joseph Bays, Stephen seemed to want to avoid both his father, and his father's Texas speculation at first.

Take a sip of coffee with eyes darting up in enjoyment. Talks on with relish.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

But later on, Stephen decided to take the place of his father. He sold the slave Richmond, met some Mexican officials in Nacogdoches, and Journeyed to San Antonio. Later he had to go to Mexico City to secure his patent. By this time, letters he sent to the states for Catholic Americans to settle by the Brazos River had found their way to American newspapers! And at first men, and then their families arrived. Austin Returned triumphant from Mexico City to the Brazos. He had agreed that all of his settlers must be Catholic, even though there was no priest in the colony. The protestant faith was prohibited. Deeply in debt in the United States, Austin happily proclaimed to be a citizen of Mexico, which has just detached itself from Spain. He began to dispense thousands of acres of land to those who agreed to live under his terms.

FADE OUT:

EXT. STEPHENSON'S A.R. POURCH - DAY

Henry sits in a rocking chair on his front pourch, reading a book. Ruth approaches.

RUTH

You called?

Henry stands and hugs Ruth, they both sit.

HENRY

Ruth, thank you. You are such a wonder, sent from God. I am so thankful for our third child, and now the promise of a fourth, especially after I thought you would have never made it through with the first. And I'm glad to be home for a spell.

RUTH

Luke had a total fit when you left us that last time. He kept throwing dust in the air, and wouldn't stop. The dust caused little Mark to cough, and then he got upset, and . . .

HENRY

What about all of us going to Texas, purchasing some very cheap land, and me laying low for a time with the preaching until we get established? Then when we have a farm, maybe the authorities down there, too, might cut us some slack?

RUTH

That sounds dangerous.

HENRY

Ruth, have you heard of the name of Stephen Austin?

RUTH

Oh yes. He was our legislator when we lived in Missouri, and the mine owner. He defeated our friend, and brother, William at that time. But William's wife, Jane, told me that Stephen resettled here in Arkansas for a time. Governor Miller gave Austin a position as circuit judge. But this time, William, in Arkansas, was elected head of the legislature. William remembered Stephen Austin's hatred for religion and his get-rich-quick schemes. And William, heeding the voice of his wife, Jane, deposed this infidel.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

William served on a committee that removed Mr. Austin from his position as circuit judge in Arkansas.

HENRY

How did you manage to learn all this?

RUTH

While you were busy preaching to everyone in Arkansas, I have been writing letters to every preacher's wife I know. And I've recently received a harvest of 3 letters!

HENRY

Whoa, who is making this correspondence possible?

RUTH

Well the traveling merchant, Mr. Woodson, is only too happy to take letters, because he likes to have an excuse to visit people. And also, I asked the Rev. James Stevenson, and he gave me some parchment and this feather pen.

She fetches and shows the parchment while holding out the feather pen.

HENRY

Examining the feather pen, with the ink being held inside through capillary action.

Where did you get the ink?

RUTH

Looks innocently at him.

HENRY

OK, don't tell me. You make this strange mixture with pine sap?

RUTH

Well, you need lamp soot too for the color, and egg white. And I think I why you know that.

HENRY

Just say, I felt a clue, sticking
all over my hand, as I was
stumbling around in the darkness,
before I departed for Fort Smith.

Ruth smiles. Henry is still somewhat stern.

HERNY

But Ruth, regardless of Austin's
religious views, he is now an agent
of the Mexican government,
parceling out land in Texas for
settlers. Bottom land by the Brazos
River in Texas, in the estate that
Austin manages costs only thirteen
cents an acre! That is one-tenth of
what it costs in Arkansas. We could
also buy dirt-cheap, what they call
a sitio for some grazing land. I h

I have heard we can even buy the land on credit, and pay with
livestock, furs, beeswax, or deerskins!

RUTH

But isn't that Catholic and Mexican
territory? Aren't there laws
against Methodists preaching in
Texas?

HENRY

Yes.

RUTH

Okay, I get it. We will be like the
Apostle Paul, entering Jerusalem,
expecting imprisonment at any time.

HENRY

No, No. Ruth, that's not going to
happen! Mr. Austin doesn't know
us. We could simply say we were old
neighbors of his from Missouri, and
we wouldn't be lying. With cheap
land, we could flourish, and give
our sons a chance to grow to the
point that they could become like
your little lieutenants. You will
become the queen of our family
kingdom! And then, when the time is
right, we will spread out and make
a brand-new country, partial to the
Methodist church!

RUTH
I suppose that doesn't sound so
bad, after all.

Henry laughs and looks to the horizon, shots of nature follow
as music swells.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

Smoke billows into the air, the sound of a STEAMBOAT HORN is
heard, LOUDLY. Joseph stands at the end of a dock, filling
his pipe with tobacco. Before he finishes, he notices
someone in the distance.

JOSEPH
Mr. Austin! Is that you?

Stephen Austin and DANNY MOUND, a tall, dark haired man and
confidant of Stephen, approach Joseph.

STEPHEN
Mr. Bays, I thought I might find
you here.

Joseph reaches to shake Stephen's hand. Stephen stares and
does not reach back. Confused, Joseph takes a step back.

JOSEPH
I uh... Hope all has been well with
you as of late.

STEPHEN
I'm going to save us all time and
cut straight to the point. Joseph,
the creation of this new society
has been the idol of my labors, and
to be frank with you, I have no
intention of allowing someone of
your persuasion to place that in
jeopardy.

Joseph stands in shock for a moment.

JOSEPH
Stephen, what exactly are you
saying?

DANNY

Don't play coy with us, Bays. You know exactly what Mr. Austin speaks of. You admitted it yourself, you are a Baptist minister.

Joseph laughs nervously, he looks at Danny for a moment, then speaks to Stephen.

JOSEPH

Mr. Austin, I fail to see how my private life effects the well being of your new society?

STEPHEN

This is Mexico, Mr. Bays, and you know as well as I do that any faith not Catholic in nature is strictly outlawed. Punishable by hanging.

JOSEPH

Mr. Austin, surely you can understand that my personal faith, practiced only in private would never become...

Joseph is cut off by Danny.

DANNY

Spare us the lies, Bays! You're not the first protestant we've ran into before, you can't keep your faith to yourself. Of course, it's not your fault, it's against your religion.

Stephen and Danny laugh, Joseph looks back and fourth in shock.

STEPHEN

Consider this a favor, Mr. Bays. The last thing I would want is for an old friend, and neighbor of mine, to be swept up in a scandal, hung for a crime you cannot help but commit. And your poor wife... uh...

JOSEPH

Rosenia...

STEPHEN

Oh course! Rosenia. Give her my condolences when you return to...

(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
where ever it is you are living
now.

Joseph steps to Stephen.

JOSEPH
Mr. Austin, please! I beg you to
reconsider, I swear to you my
family will be no trouble to you or
this new society! If you send me
back, I will be ruined, ruined I
tell you!

Stephen watches, emotionless. Danny smirks.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
I have sold all that I could, taken
all of my meager savings and
arranged for this move, Mr. Austin.
If you send me back, I will never
recover. Please, sir. Please.

Stephen remains emotionless. Danny begins to laugh aloud.

DANNY
That's rich! Perhaps you should
have considered that before moving
to a Catholic territory!

Danny laughs.

STEPHEN
Best of luck to you and your wife,
Mr. Bays. I believe in the strong
resolve and resourcefulness of
native Missourians, such as you and
Rosenia.

Stephen and Danny begins to walk away, he turns back to
Joseph.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Next boat should be here by
morning, get some rest Mr. Bays!
Goodbye!

Joseph stares in stock as Stephen and Danny walk into the
distance. He abruptly drops the sack in his hands, and squats
down and rests his face in his hands.

FADE OUT:

INT. STEVENSON'S HOME - DAY

The sounds of birds chirping accompany a scene of light gently shining through drapes in front a large glass window. CLOSEUP of Jane's hand across William's forehead.

JANE

Darling, you're burning up.

Jane stands at the side of a bed. William lies in the bed, eyes closed, he moans. Jane takes a seat in a chair by the side of the bed.

WILLIAM

I'm so glad to be home, my love.

Jane smiles as a tears well in her eyes. She reaches out her hand, grabbing Williams on the bedside. He squeezes her hand tight.

JANE

I as well, I fear what might have come to you and James if this had happened in Texas. Who would you have gone to in your time of need William? I was so afraid I would never see you again, when you left.

William smiles and Jane.

WILLIAM

God is always with us, dear. He watches over us, keeps us safe, minds our paths and his will prevails. I'm thankful to be here with you, the Lord knows well and good that I will survive this sickness by the quality of your loving care.

Jane smiles back at William. There is a pause, she pulls her hand back almost suddenly. She kneels down, then lowering a towel into a metal bowl. She wrings out the towel and then places it on William's forehead.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Thank you kindly.

Jane sits back down as William closes his eyes.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

When I crossed the Red River, it was like I had entered into a different world.

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

There were these wild flowers, all over. The colors were bright and stunning, dark and mysterious, it just took me by surprise.

JANE

That does sound beautiful.

WILLIAM

It was, truly it was. James and I found ourselves splitting up, and to tell you honestly I was a bit worried after my run-in with that thief, and his close call with that bobcat. But, we split to try and find Pecan Point.

Jane reaches over and retrieves the towel from Williams forehead.

JANE

Who found it first?

WILLIAM

I did. I'm not sure what James did while I was there, but the next day we met back where we said we would, and I lead him to the settlement. It was a wonderful little place, fathers, mothers, children, all excited to see some new friendly faces.

JANE

What became of it all?

WILLIAM

Well, we got a few of the men to agree to meet and study the Bible. And that was just a great blessing. But, I had a run in with a side of myself I hadn't seen in some time. I feel as if the Devil himself tracked me down, and held me up, hoping I would buckle under the pressure. He was wrong, but only by the Lord's strength was I able to push through.

JANE

You were quite the wild child,
William

Jane smiles brightly and laughs, William does the same.

WILLIAM

That I was, that I was. But... there was a darkness to the place that even my preaching couldn't subside. It wasn't long after I had arrived that a man came running into the settlement, hollering. A horse thief had struck, and before I knew it, a posse formed. And, not long after that, a small lynch mob. The thief was hung before dinner, and when they served a pork feast that night, I couldn't help but think of that horse thief.

Jane looks saddened by William's story.

JANE

Did you have the chance to share the good word with the thief before he died.

William sighs.

WILLIAM

I wish I had, but the mob was less than interested in my attempts to halt them, even for just a few moments to save that man's soul.

Jane pauses for a moment.

JANE

That is a shame. How long did you and James stay at Pecan Point after that?

WILLIAM

Only another day.

Jane looks confused.

JANE

Then what took you two so long to get back?

William pauses for a moment.

WILLIAM

Well, my dear. We pushed deeper into Texas.

Jane looks upset.

JANE

I knew you must have.

William looks slightly ashamed.

WILLIAM

Well, when we had...

William is cut off by Jane.

JANE

Why, William? Surely you knew that was dangerous?

William says nothing for a moment.

WILLIAM

Well... we had to, Jane. There wasn't much choice in it. The Lord called us to it.

Jane looks upset.

JANE

Was he calling you to get sick too?

WILLIAM

Well...

JANE

And calling you to get robbed too? Maybe next time he'll call you to fall off your horse and break your damn neck! William, I love you, but always saying the Lord willed it, that's not a good excuse!

William says nothing for a long moment.

WILLIAM

I suppose that you're right Jane. I just felt that it was the right thing to do. Maybe that's the Lord, speaking through me.

Jane seems to relax slightly.

JANE

I'm sorry William, I don't mean to be hard on you. I just don't think that was a wise choice.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

You were a week later than you said you'd be, came home sick as a dog, and James was so tired he's been of no help today or yesterday. I just wish you would be more careful, it's a cruel and violent world out there, and I think Texas might be worse, or so I've been told.

William thinks for a moment before he replies.

WILLIAM

It's alright dear, I think you might be right. No matter how it hurts my pride.

Again, Jane lowers the rag into the water, Music begins to swell as she takes the towel back to William and exits frame.

INT. STEPHENSON TEXAS HOME - DAY

Facing the front door, LOUD KNOCKING is heard, Henry enters frame and approaches his door.

HENRY

I'm coming! I'm coming.

Henry opens the door, standing before him are Stephen Austin and Danny Mound.

Henry is audibly shocked.

HERNY

Mr. Austin! What a pleasant surprise!

STEPHEN

Mr. Stephenson, this is my associate, Danny Mound. May we come in for a brief spell?

Henry hesitates for a moment.

HENRY

Well... sure thing! Common in!

Henry steps away from the door and welcomes the two men after him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Please, gentlemen, take a seat.

Henry gestures to a few chairs near a fireplace. The three of them walk to the chairs, each taking a seat.

STEPHEN

Thank you, Mr. Stephenson. I take your time in Texas thus far has been pleasant?

HENRY

Uhm, yes. These past few weeks have served myself, Ruth, and the children quite well.

STEPHEN

Wonderful. That's just wonderful.

There is an awkward pause.

HENRY

What can I do for you gentlemen this fine afternoon?

Danny smiles, Stephen looks emotionless.

STEPHEN

Now, Mr. Stephenson, I'm sure you're curious why myself and Mr. Mound are here.

Henry chuckles.

HENRY

Well, yes, I sure am!

STEPHEN

Yes, well. I'll do my best to keep it brief. There have been rumors of you preaching at the McNeal's house this past week.

Henry's expression turns sour.

HENRY

You know what they say about rumors, Mr. Austin...

There is a brief pause. Danny leans forward in his chair.

DANNY

Henry, is it?

Henry reaches to a small table beside him, he lifts up a pipe.

HENRY

It's Mr. Stephenson to you, son.

Danny smirks. Henry takes a few puffs while lighting the pipe.

DANNY

Well, Mr. Stephenson, are you aware of the punishment for preaching in these parts?

Danny leans slightly further forward, lowering his voice

DANNY (CONT'D)

It's bad luck, you know, to cheat the hang-man... But, lucky for you, Mr. Austin don't believe in that sort of superstition.

Ruth enters the room, she stands for a moment before speaking. Henry notices her.

HENRY

Ruth, my love... if you don't mind...

Henry is cut off by Ruth. Danny and Stephen turn to look at Ruth.

RUTH

Who are these men, Henry?

HENRY

This is Mr. Austin, and his associate, Danny. Now, dear, if you don't mind, give us a few minutes. We're discussing significant matters.

Ruth pauses for a moment.

RUTH

Yes, dear.

Stephen and Danny turn back to Henry.

HENRY

Thank you.

Ruth slowly exits the room. CLOSEUP of Henry, he looks to the Danny, slowly, then Stephen. Henry leans forward in his chair.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What exactly are you for gentlemen?
Or did you simply feel the need to
come into my home, threaten me
vaguely, and leave?

CLOSEUP of Stephen, he stares for a moment before speaking.

STEPHEN

It's time for you and your family
to find a new home, Mr. Stephenson.

Henry recedes in his chair. Closeup of his hand as he begins
to clench his fist.

HENRY

What on Earth makes you think I
have the means to do something
as... extravagant... as that, Mr.
Austin?

Henry laughs mockingly, he becomes more animated, his voice
grows louder.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What about my humble dwelling
impresses you to ascertain that I
am in anyway, whatsoever, a man of
means!?

Henry lowers his voice.

HENRY (CONT'D)

How exactly do you propose I do
such a thing.

STEPHEN

Frankly, Henry, neither I nor Mr.
Mound here give a damn.

DANNY

It's your neck on the line, sounds
to me that's an issue of your
concern, Henry.

Henry stares at the men, a smile on his face.

HENRY

You two intend to ruin me, or kill
me.

STEPHEN

I'm glad we could reach an
understanding, Mr. Stephenson.

Stephen begins to stand, Danny does the same.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Consider this a favor...

Stephen and Danny turn and walk for the door. Henry stands slowly. Danny opens the door, Stephen turns to Henry, standing in the doorway.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
The Mexicans wouldn't give you the
chance to flee.

Stephen exits the home, Danny follows, closing the door loudly as he exits.

Closeup of Henry's fist and he clenches, SHAKING.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. STEVENSON HOME - DAY

CLOSEUP of a cup of hot tea in William's hand, steam rising from the cup. MIDSHOT of William, sat on a small sofa, wrapped in a blanket, as he listens.

JAMES (O.S.)
You told the deacons of the
Methodist Conference about your
health?

William nods his head, slowly.

WILLIAM
That's why they asked me to head
for Western Louisiana.

James is sat in a chair near the sofa. He looks intently at William.

JAMES
Them why are you upset about this,
father? You and I both know how
dangerous Texas is. In your health,
it's a death wish....

William closes his eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Mother wants you to stay, she
wouldn't be able to go on without
you.

William looks to James.

WILLIAM

Who is going to bring the gospel to Texas? Now that the Stephensons are back, there ain't a soul down there to spread the word? It's a Godless country, and it will remain that way unless someone can get down there and change it.

James lowers his head for a moment, then looks back to William.

JAMES

I'll go, on my own.

William looks over to James.

WILLIAM

Are you sure, son? Are you ready?

JAMES

I'm as ready as I'll ever be. Just make sure while I'm gone to watch after mother, she's worried sick about you.

WILLIAM

I'll do my best, son. But you worry about yourself.

James smiles.

JAMES

Can't be any worse than our first go around.

They both laugh.

WILLIAM

The men at San Augustine will help you, just get down there and you'll be alright.

James stands.

JAMES

I'll leave tomorrow morning, first thing.

James reaches for the tea cup in William's hand.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Let me get you another cup.

WILLIAM
Thank you son.

James walks out of the room. William looks up as a tears begins to stream down his face.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
Protect him, O Lord. Keep him safe.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BAYS HOME - DAY

Rosenia sits at her kitchen table, mending a pair of worn socks. Suddenly, the door SWINGS OPEN. Rosenia gasps loudly.

Joseph stumbles into the room, visibly exhausted.

ROSENIA
Oh my! Joseph!

Rosenia runs over to Joseph as he is stumbling.

ROSENIA (CONT'D)
What happened to you!?

Rosenia guides him to a small sofa.

JOSEPH
My love...

Joseph rests on the sofa.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
The unthinkable has happened.

Joseph COUGHS loudly. Rosenia kneels before Joseph.

ROSENIA
Oh no, what happened Joseph!?

JOSEPH
Austin, he met me at the dock. He was with one of his thugs...

Rosenia covers her mouth in shock.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
They threatened to kill me.

Tears begin to stream down Rosenia's face.

ROSENIA
Oh my God...

Rosenia leaps forward, clinging onto Joseph.

ROSENIA (CONT'D)
Oh my God, Joseph...

Rosenia proceeds to weep as Joseph holds her tightly.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 25: HENRY and RUTH: (RE-WRITE)

INT. STEPHENSONS M.O. HOME - NIGHT

Ruth sits in the living area of their old Missouri home. Lit by candles, she drinks from a small cup of tea.

RUTH
I'm so glad to be back home, safe
and sound.

Henry tends to a small fire.

HENRY
Ruth, I am so sorry to have put you
through all of that heartache and
stress. Only to have that sick man,
Stephen Austin, threaten and insult
me in my own home. I'm just
thankful that we all got back
alive.

Ruth sits in silence for a long moment.

RUTH
Don't give up Henry. We can still
make a difference in Texas.

Henry looks deeply into the fire.

HENRY
How? What can I do from here?

RUTH
Return to Texas, spite that
monster, Stephen Austin, and bring
the Gospel to Texas anyway!

Henry shakes his head, he turns around to face Ruth.

HENRY

And what of you and the children?
How will you survive?

Ruth smiles warmly at Henry.

RUTH

How we always have. We're home now,
the church will help us.

Henry pauses for a moment.

HENRY

I suppose you're right. And with
Mrs. Stevenson nearby you have help
with the children.

Ruth stands, walks to Henry. She grabs his hands in hers.

RUTH

Prepare and go, do God's work,
dear.

They embrace, both smiling.

The fire burns gently as the sound of crackling is heard.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE INNER SANCTUM (JAMES) - UNKNOWN

James enters frame from complete darkness. He sets down his belongings, and as he opens a book, LIGHTS switch on.

JAMES

Yes brothers and sisters, it is
dangerous to preach Christ in this
world. And we all know the story
now of what happened to the
Reverend Bays, right here, in this
new community of San Augustine. I
suppose any one of you could be
seized, bound, and taken to San
Antonio for actively promoting the
Gospel in this pagan country. But
I am thankful for the courage of
some of your leaders like Mr.
Samuel McMahan, and Mr. Littleton
Fowler who have not only
transported me safely to speak to
all of you today, but who have
agreed with me on a plan of action.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Being appointed to minister to the Sabine Circuit of Louisiana, I have no actual calling to minister to you here in Mexican Texas. But our plan is to periodically have a meeting of our society here in Mr. McMahon's home, nevertheless. We know all of you here are one with us on this matter. Periodically, also your leaders will meet with me at Camp Sabine on the other side of the river. We are not going form an actual church or make trouble for this government. We will pray for it, and pray that God will enlighten the minds of its rulers, to satisfy an elemental right, that each of us should be able to worship according to the dictates of our own consciences.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. VICTORIAN HOME - DAY

Porter chimes in again, again.

PORTER

Well Mom, when the Texas Revolution began to come up, was Granddad and the others able to preach in the whole of Texas?

DEBORAH

Even when the Texas Revolution was over in 1836, Texas was a very unsafe place to preach. The Mexicans still came up and possessed parts of South Texas. Vigilante groups fought one another, and ministers could get in the way. Indians were still a threat. But more and more Americans came to Texas, and the power in society shifted against the Mexican government. In 1833, two years before the fighting between the Texans and Mexicans commenced, one of the traveling preachers indeed was able to preach throughout Texas.

REBECCA

Was Granddad the one?

DEBORAH

No, but it was someone your Granddad, and Great-Granddad worked with.

REBEKAH

Well, why not Granddad James?

DEBORAH

Well there were a lot of things that mattered when someone set off to preach in the wilds. One needed to be a pathfinder, to know how to fix gunlocks. You had to know how to hunt, how to ride in difficult terrain, and how to deal with strangers. Finally, a preacher needed a very supportive and resourceful wife, to set him off in style, and to hold the family together at home. I believe it was your Great-Granddad William, who headed the Louisiana District, who decided that it was Henry Alone who had all of those advantages and could make that first Texas Circuit.

EXT. STEPHENSON'S HOME - DAY

Henry is kneeling, praying by a large tree. Ruth walks slowly to his side.

Henry stops praying after a moment, he stands and hugs Ruth.

HENRY

Are you going to be alright without me?

RUTH

The Lord watches over us, Henny. I know we'll be alright. Just keep away from danger, I know it's hard to, down there, but try.

Henry smiles at Ruth.

HENRY

I think I now know what it means to have a love stronger than death.

They again embrace.

FADE TO:

EXT. HENRY TRAVELING MONTAGE - DAY/NIGHT

Henry walking down a gravel road.

Henry looking to the sky.

White clouds dot the bright blue sky.

Henry approaches the same field William and James did earlier in the film.

Henry finds the large tree in the large field.

He prays under the tree.

Henry walks along the banks of the Red River.

Henry walks down a dirt path, directly into the sunset.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SALOON IN NACOGDOCHES - NIGHT

Henry walks upon a small settlement, a few buildings are dimly lit by lanterns. Henry see's a man stumbling in the street, he approaches.

HENRY

Well, howdy stranger. Are you doing alright?

SAM HOUSTON, tall, dark features, young, clearly drunk, turns to face Henry.

SAM

Well, now! Who're you?

HENRY

My name is Henry Stephenson, I'm a traveling preacher.

Sam stumbles back slightly.

SAM

A traveling preacher, in Mexican Tejas, I'll be dammed!

Sam burps loudly, while trying to remain upright.

SAM (CONT'D)

My name's Sam Houston. Seeing as how we're now acquainted, why don't you do me a favor and share a little of those old words of wisdom you got from that fancy book of yers!

Henry laughs, and retrieves his Bible from the large sack he's carrying.

HENRY

You sure about that, Sam? I mean, you seem to have been enjoying a few at that ol' saloon there.

Sam laughs, burps and staggers slightly.

SAM

Well now, Mr. Preacher man, Sarsaparilla is all I've been drinking! I'm clear as the blue sky on a sunny day!

Sam stumbles over and sits on the ground. He pulls from his breast pocket a small slab, with a sheet of paper and a graphite stick.

SAM (CONT'D)

Now, go on Henry, lay the word of God on me!

Henry laughs.

HENRY

Well, Sam. To tell you the truth, God loves you. He's watching over you right now, as we speak.

Sam begins to take sloppy notes.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Thing is, he ain't too please with your fondness for... Sarsaparilla. You making a fool of yourself, getting into all kinds of trouble, that's not what he wants for ya, you understand?

Sam nods his head sloppily in agreement.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What do you do for a living, Sam?

Sam continues to write for a moment.

SAM

I uh... I'm a lawyer. That's why I go these here fancy writing implements.

Henry looks incredulous. Sam writes a few more odd strokes on his slab. He then hands it to Henry.

SAM (CONT'D)

How're my notes looking, Henry?

Henry looks at the slab, it is covered in incoherent scribbles and odd shapes.

HENRY

Well, I have to say Sam, I've never seen anything quite like it.

Sam laughs and tries to stand, he falls over.

HERY

Here...

Henry reaches over and helps Sam up.

HERRY

Let me help you get home Sam, you're in no shape to be out here by your lonesome.

Henry helps Sam along as he staggers down the road.

SAM

Well, thank you kindly Mr. Preacher-Man!

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE INNER SANCTUM (HENRY STEPHENSON) - UNKNOWN

Henry appears from the darkness.

HENRY

Grace to you, settlers in this lovely new village of Washington on the Brazos. One of your citizens was gracious enough to tell me the story of what some of you witnessed last Saturday night, when a panther came to town and tore apart one of your dogs.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

Now if that had been my faithful
sheepdog, I would have especially
remembered that sight. And David,
way back in the Old Testament in
Psalm 17 beheld an amazing sight
that he remembered.

Danny enters frame, pistol drawn, pointed directly at Henry.

DANNY MOUND

Stop right there. You know
preaching is outlawed around these
parts.

Chatter emerges from the darkness

UNKNOWN #1

He can't?

UNKNOWN #2

Why the hell can't he?

Danny looks around in fear.

UNKNOWN #3

Get out of the way, jerk!

DANNY

Keep quite or I'll arrest all of
you!

The voices grow angry.

UNKNOWN #2

Like hell you will!

UNKNOWN #1

Get lost!

UNKNOWN #3

Go on now! Get!

Danny begins to panic, he quickly backs out of frame.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. AUSTIN'S TX HOME - DAY

Stephen and Emily sit near one another in the living room of
Stephen's house.

STEPHEN

How lovely to have my sweet sister Emily again in my own neighborhood.

EMILY

Stephen, you are so impressive. You are like a king of a new country. And isn't your selling of those 200 leagues of land or so that you have out by the King's Highway helping you to get out of our American debt.

STEPHEN

Sister, between the settlers, surveyor fees, and the Mexican administrators in Saltillo, I can never seem to receive the payment I deserve. If I could have kept the arrangement I had back in 1826, we'd all be truly rich by now, rather than always having to worry about what the creditors might do.

EMILY

But the country is growing rich!

STEPHEN

Yes, and your husband, James, would grow a lot more rich if he would listen to my advice about which New Orleans merchants he should trust...

There is a long pause.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Are you enjoying the 50,000 acres I saved for you by Chocolate Bayou?

EMILY

Well James still doesn't quite understand why you specifically gifted me with half of the land. He thinks it would have been only proper for you to have ceded it only to him.

STEPHEN

I might have, if I had trusted his judgment.

There is an uncomfortably long silence.

EMILY

It seems though that the settlers are a lot more difficult to control. Do you think all the recent immigrants from America are going to rise up against Mexico?

STEPHEN

There are problems all over, in Nacogdoches, Anahuac. The government in Coahuila doesn't think we deserve to be our own state. But thanks to the quality of American wagons, the Mexicans are becoming really outnumbered. And that's not good when you have hot-headed anarchists trying to establish their own law.

EMILY

I hear there is even a preacher right now who is flouting the law, and traveling all over Texas, a Methodist.

STEPHEN

You know Emily, I would rather have twelve horse-thieves wandering up and down the Brazos than a Methodist minister right now. Anarchists and horse-thieves can't define anything. But an evangelical minister can hold out his finger, and define Mexico as evil. The next thing you know we will have a revolution.

EMILY

No wonder the Mexican General Bustamente gave you such a big hug when you were in Mexico City. You are the best person Mexico has in these parts... But you have heard about this Methodist Minister, right? And you haven't been able to have him stopped?

STEPHEN

Not yet.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. GRASSY FIELDS - SUNSET

Sam and MARGERET, a short, young woman, frolic in a grassy field at sunset.

SAM

Look, I love you. All Texas is before you. I am their leader. Come with me and be the queen. Leave your home here in Alabama, and come with me to fulfill your destiny as the most special Southern woman in the history of these states!

MARGARET

Sam, I'm not ruling out that possibility... But I refuse to marry a twice-divorced drunk, unless...

Margaret looks intensely into Sam's eyes.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

He gives me an absolute reason to believe that he has renounced his past, and will pray each day with me to receive a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sam holds Margaret.

SAM

Anything for you.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. WOODED PATH - DAY

Henry walks down a wooded path, he stumbles upon two men relaxing by the roadside. Henry approaches them.

HENRY

Excuse me gentlemen, but would either of you happen to know if this is the way to the town they call Gonzales?

One of the men, ARTHUR, is widdling a small stick with his pocket knife. He continues to look down and replies.

ARTHUR

Gee, I don't know. Rich, is this the way to ol' Gonzales?

RICH, another man laid against a tree near Arthur, lifts his large brimmed hat up to reveal his face, one eye open.

RICH
Who's asking.

Henry smiles at Rich.

HENRY
Well, my name is Henry Stephenson.
I'm a traveling preacher.

Arthur laughs and continues widdling. Rich stares with one eye.

RICH
A traveling preacher, huh? We don't
get too many of those round these
parts now do we Arthur.

Arthur continues to widdle.

ARTHUR
Sure don't.

Rich lowers his hat and adjusts his position under the tree.

RICH
Yeah, well that's the road to
Gonzales. Keep on and you'll get
there.

HENRY
If ya'll don't mind me asking.

Arthur chimes in.

ARTHUR
Sure don't.

Henry pauses, then continues.

HENRY
Would ya'll know of any Methodists
in Gonzales, by chance?

Rich lifts his hat again, revealing his one open eye.

RICH
Well, to be honest with ya Mr.,
there's many kinds of vagrants that
wander through town. There's a man
there named Clyde, and he's a fur
and feather trader on the side.

Rich takes his hat off and sits up against the tree.

RICH (CONT'D)
But to be honest with ya Mr., I
couldn't tell you what a Methodist
is really.

Arthur finally looks up from his widdling.

ARTHUR
Ain't that some kinda speckled
bird?

Rich looks over to Arthur.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
No, wait... it's one of them new
fangled kinda critters they brough
over from French Algeire?

Henry laughs, he sets down the sack he is carrying.

HENRY
Well now, I happen to be a
Methodist myself. We are believers
in Jesus Christ, and we read a
divine scripture called the Holy
Bible.

Arthur flippantly points his knife at Henry.

ARTHUR
That's right! I knew I heard of
ya'll! Ya'll are like them Bible
thumpers, the uh, Baptists, I think
they call em'.

Rich shakes his head in disagreement.

RICH
No, no Arthur you got it all wrong!
The Methodists are like them fancy
Lutherans, they got those big
churches with the colored glass and
pretty pictures in em'.

Arthur looks pleasantly surprised. He looks over to Henry

ARTHUR
Oh, well, excuse me then your
majesty.

Henry laughs.

HENRY

Well now gentlemen, I wouldn't describe it quite like that. Methodists share the good news of Jesus Christ, the message of salvation by belief in Jesus Christ, and his sacrifice for us and all our sins.

Rich looks confused.

RICH

Now why would you wanna do that?

HENRY

I believe the Lord has called me to spread the good news, that any one of us, all of us can be saved.

Rich takes a moment.

RICH

I'm not so sure, Mr. I feel pretty safe right here under this tree, besides, ain't that preaching illegal round these parts?

Arthur chimes in, still widdling.

ARTHUR

Sure is.

HENRY

Well, in the Bible, it says to obey the laws of God, not the laws of man.

Rich looks down.

RICH

I suppose that's one way of looking at it.

Arthur looks up.

ARTHUR

But ain't you got somewhere better to be preaching at? The people round these parts are plenty Godly. We got that feeling, when we do something wrong, what's that called Rich?

RICH
That's uh, your uh, conscience!

ARTHUR
Right! Conscience! So, why then
Mr., are you out here trynna
complicate things so much with this
salvation and all that?

Henry chuckles.

HENRY
It's not complicated my friend,
it's real simple.

RICH
I'm not so sure, sounds to me like
a big old mess. I'm thankful for
the way things are now.

HENRY
You're thankful for being ignorant?

ARTHUR
Sure am!

RICH
Shut up Arthur!

Henry laughs.

HERNY
I'll be in Gonzales for a few days
if you gentlemen would like to hear
more.

Henry picks up the sack he carried there.

HENRY
Thanks for all the help.

ARTHUR
Anytime, Mr.!

RICH
Good luck on your journey, preacher-
man.

Rich settles back against the tree, he lowers his hat as Henry walks back down the path. Rich lowers his hat over his face again. Arthur continues widdling.

ARTHUR
What a strange bird.

Rich lifts his hat abruptly, staring at Arthur with one eye.

RICH

What?

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. AUSTIN'S TX HOME - NIGHT

Stephen and Emily sit near one another in Stephen's living room.

EMILY

The people of Texas did not deserve to have you Stephen! The settlers from the states who have come in the last few years are in general a contemptible throng of ingrates. They don't appreciate all you did to bring civilization to Texas.

STEPHEN

No, No, it was also the longer-terms settlers who also went for Houston in droves. They were unable to see or understand their own interests. I was buried in that election!!

Stephen COUGHS loudly.

STEPHEN AUSTIN

Now I've got nothing.

EMILY

But our homes at Chocolate Bayou and Peach Point were miraculously saved. You are surrounded by nephews and nieces who cherish you, and are grateful to you. Perhaps we are not quite out of debt, but isn't it time perhaps to marry, and enjoy life as you can?

STEPHEN

I have suffered for the last fifteen years to make this a great country! I have worked seven days of the week, and have given the last ounce of my strength, so that Texas could be prosperous and happy!

Stephen catches his breath.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
But I can tell you, I have not been
happy! And I will not be Happy!

Emily sympathetically takes his hand. Austin breaks into
tears.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I cannot abide such stupidity,
ingratitude, and superstition! Just
like out creditors, the complete
and utter imbecility of the people
of this place, it never goes away!

Stephen pulls back from Emily, crying.

STEPHEN AUSTIN
There is no reason to live! There
is no reason to live!!

Emily embraces Stephen who is falling apart.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. VICTORIAN HOME - DAY

Porter chimes in, again, again... again.

PORTER
So was Mr. Austin able to split
Texas from Coahuila and get the
powers he needed?

DEBORAH
No, Mr. Austin had the surprise of
his life instead. The Mexican
government accused Austin of
plotting an insurrection, and they
arrested him. He stayed over a
year in Mexico City. Meanwhile,
just as the revolution in Texas
spread, traveling ministers surged
across the borders. In a time of
great uncertainty, fear, and
revolution, people wanted to at
least hear the Word of God.

PORTER
Well what happened to Mr. Austin
then?

REBEKAH

Well, imprisonment seemed to teach him that Texas deserved complete independence. He even joined the cause. But as the Revolution continued he lost faith in the people, and in pretty much everything. The great general, Sam Houston, became the real leader of Texas. Houston whipped the Mexican army at San Jacinto, and then won Texas's first presidential election as its own country against Stephen F. Austin, winning ten votes for every one that Austin had, Heartbroken, Austin died in the same year that he was defeated.

REBEKAH (CONT'D)

Did the new leader, Sam Houston, become a Christian?

DEBORAH

Well that's an interesting story, Rebekah. As we've seen he was pretty much of a rip-roaring drunk. But his new young wife Margaret had many long talks with him, and he became a convert who was baptized and turned a corner on his previous life.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

A MINISTER and Sam Houston stand chest deep in a lake.

MINISTER

Sam Houston, I baptize you in the name of the father and the son and the Holy Spirit.

The Minister lowers Houston into the water and pulls him back.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Now Mr. Houston, you see where this creek extends?

The Minister points deeper into the lake.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Your sins are going down with these waters, away from you. You have been cleansed, and the terrible grime of sin has been effaced! They are being washed down with the tide.

Sam Houston shakes his head, looking down, then back up.

SAM HOUSTON

I sure feel sorry for those fish!

Sam Houston leaves the Minister in the water, he embraces Margaret.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDER OAK TREE - DAY

BIRDS CHIRPING as the camera focuses on leaves in a tree. The sun shines brightly.

Joseph stands before a small crowd, preaching.

JOSEPH

You may have heard that recently our great hero at San Jacinto, Sam Houston, our general who defeated the army of Santa Anna, and captured the Mexican dictator... Sam Houston, our current president of Texas, has recently come to the healing waters. He made a confession of his belief, and he felt the cleansing tide of Baptism.

The crowd claps and Joseph yells out.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Praise be to the Lord! Go in peace my brothers and sisters in Christ!

Joseph turns around, and places his bible in a sack. He stands, turns around, Emily is standing behind him.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Emily, I thought that was you!

EMILY

Yes, I heard you were in the neighborhood and I couldn't miss it!

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

It's so good to see you again, I enjoyed your sermon today. It was very, interesting.

JOSEPH

It's good to see you too. How have you been lately?

EMILY

I've had... better days, Joseph. To tell you the truth, Stephen's passing took a toll on me. I've been fearing the day he would die for my whole life. Now that it's come and gone, well, I'm still in shock.

Joseph looks unimpressed.

JOSEPH

Yes, I see. I'm sorry for your loss. Have you thought about praying on these matters?

Emily smiles and takes a moment to reply.

EMILY

Joseph, I admire your passion, and conviction, but I don't understand what makes you privy to what God does and doesn't do?

JOSEPH

It is not a matter of me knowing so much. It is a matter of me knowing little, and putting my trust in the Word that God has given us.

Emily smile dissipates.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

You know, Emily, I have prayed for you.

She looks away and pauses for a moment.

EMILY

I hear Rosenia and you are living separately these days.

JOSEPH

It is true that she has gone along with another teaching, one that I find not even Christian.

(MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

And this has created many hardships for my ministry... and family. Still, I hope that she will return to the truth, just as I pray that you will, some day.

They stare at one another for a long moment. Joseph breaks eye contact and looks down.

EMILY

Thank you for your prayers Joseph. I hope to see you again, someday.

Emily turns and walks away. Joseph looks to her as she leaves, he picks up his things and walks out of frame.

CUT TO:

INT. STEVENSON'S HOME - DAY

In the Stevensons home, William, Jane, James, Henry and Ruth sit around a table. On the table, coffee, cakes and flowers.

HENRY

The people in Gonzales barely seemed to know the name of Jesus. I asked one woman if she knew who killed Abel, and she said, "I didn't know he was dead!"

Laughter erupts around the table.

HENRY (CONT'D)

There was this old man who testified that he no longer hated anyone. When I asked him how God had helped him to get to this point, he said:

HENRY (CONT'D)

(Mimicking old man)

Well all those varmints who tried to mess with my wife, and all those scalawags who accused me of stealing... now they're all dead!

Laughter erupts again. As it dies down, Jane speaks up

JANE

Ruth, your husband has been such an inspiration to all of us.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

Traveling through Texas, before the Revolution, preaching the Gospel to everyone who would listen, risking his neck to try and save so many souls!

Ruth smiles, looking up to Henry.

RUTH

Well, to tell you the truth, there were times I was very afraid he wouldn't make it back alive, but I am so thankful the Lord has been able to use Henry to spread his word. Ya'll might want to stop asking him to go on so many thousand mile journey's, his age is starting to slow him down.

William laughs lightly.

WILLIAM

Tell me about it!

The group laughs. Henry looks across the table and points his finger at William.

HENRY

Well you know what I say to her, William? If the Lord decides my usefulness is at an end, it will finally allow Ruth to marry someone her own age!

The whole table erupts in laughter again.

RUTH

O Henry! Stop speaking such nonsense! Joshua prayed for the sun to stop. God will see it as an easy matter to get you better.

HENRY

(Whitty)

It would probably be easier if I just went to heaven!

Laughter returns to the group.

WILLIAM

If you're going, take me with you!

The laughter grows. As it dies down, James speaks up.

JAMES

Well Ruth, now that Henry has our sides sore from laughter, let's hear your side of the matter. You managed quite well that year Henry was down in Texas, how was it?

Ruth pauses for a moment to think.

RUTH

You know, it was a tough years, rearing the boys by myself was no easy task, but we give thanks to God for that year. 1833 was such a turning point, it was like the walls of Jericho falling down! Even after all his preaching, Henry was never arrested. I think the people had finally gotten sick of the charade, they wanted a free country!

Smiles around the table, Ruth looks to Henry.

RUTH (CONT'D)

But I think it's time for you to rest, and recover.

JAMES

I think we all need time to be home from that place. Texas takes a toll on everyone who goes there.

WILLIAM

You can say that again. I still haven't felt myself since I got, whatever sickness it was down there.

JANE

You're getting old William.

Jane looks around the table.

JANE (CONT'D)

I try and tell him to take it slow these days, but boy, he does not listen.

Jane looks to James.

JANE (CONT'D)

Does he listen, James?

JAMES

Not one bit.

HENRY

Take it easy old timer, you'll
throw out your back!

WILLIAM

Easy for you to say, you've still
got your youth!

Laughter erupts once again.

HERNY

Take it easy with the humor,
William. I can only laugh so much
in one night.

WILLIAM

I'll do my best. No promises, no
promises.

Ruth looks around the table.

RUTH

When Henry was gone, even with Luke
and Mark here, I often felt very
alone. It seemed darker at night,
more silent. I prayed with all my
heart that we would never be apart
again. And, since he's come back
from Texas, we haven't.

JANE

That's very sweet, Ruth. I think I
speak for us both when I say we are
glad to have you boys back.

RUTH

Yes, absolutely!

WILLIAM

Well I'm very thankful for what you
both accomplished, Henry, and Ruth.
I know the Lord is speaking of you
both right now, saying "Well done
thy good and faithful servants!"
There's now Bible societies all
over Texas, before long there will
be churches too!

JAMES

And would you believe the city of
Houston has one of them?

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

The city of sin, mud and magnolias
finally has a church!

The room laughs again.

JANE

Praise God that we have sizable
congregations at the borders of
Texas, in Red River and San
Augustine counties. I pray everyone
who comes through will visit, I
hear McMahan is thinking of
building a proper church!

WILLIAM

What a blessing, truly. I hope you
all know how much a difference
ya'll have made in that nation.

HENRY

I just want to thank you William,
Jane, James. You two striking out
into the wilderness, that inspired
me. I don't think I'd have the
relationship I have with God now,
if it weren't for you three. Thank
you.

WILLIAM

Thank God.

JAMES

You can say that again!

JANE

Thank God!

The table laughs again, for the last time. Music SWELLS.

FADE TO BLACK:

ROLL CREDITS.