

# REMEDY

## *Playwright's Notes:*

*This is a “memory play.” Whatever the director must do to reinforce this idea, the director should do. This play's staging will therefore succeed with minimal stage settings. The actors' skill will promote the illusion of time and place.*

*Regarding the crowd scenes: The playwright is accustomed to working with small budgets and casts. Spatial and economic considerations may force the director to have pre-recorded voices coming out of the speakers. Or—and this is a solution I find attractive—“crowd members” may be seated among the audience, calling out their lines.*

*Concerning the playwright's near exclusive use of English, he debated whether to have the Lakotans speak their native language, and either project translations on a large screen or have interpreters repeat every sentence. After the 1977 premiere of STAR WARS, the film's producer said, “Yes, we know there are no sounds in space.” I offer a similar rationale. For the sake of dramatic ease, I employ English. The Lakotans will pronounce “Thornton” as “Thorntoan.”*

*The playwright will use sections of Johnny Greenwood's score for BODYSONG in this piece.*

*A LARGE SCREEN over center stage will have images projected on it.*

*SCREEN PROJECTION: Photo or painting of Southern Montana. Text: “Montana Territory, 1851”*

*Stage right, overhead lighting illuminates a very old woman: PRETTY NOSE.*

*Pretty Nose: I am Pretty Nose. I once was Azubah, named after the wife of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, one of the twelve spies sent by Moses into Canaan. Then came the incident. Well before the Indian Wars and Little Big Horn. My father, Caleb Thornton, led his Christian parishioners west from Philadelphia in 1838 and founded the settlement of Remedy. We lived in harmony with the Lakota. My father and Chief Three Moon were friends. My brother Ezekiel and Chief Three Moon's son Napayshni were hunting brothers, bringing elk meat to our people every autumn. Divided 50/50. All was harmony. Until...*

*Lights fade over Pretty Nose.*

*SCREEN PROJECTION: Image of a tribal meeting hall*

*Lights up: a festival is in progress, center stage. We hear happy crowd sounds through the sound system.*

*Lakotans and white men and women mingle. Among the Lakotans are CHIEF THREE MOON; the shaman MATOSKAH; Chief Three Moon's teen-aged son, NAPAYSHNI; and TASHUNKA, a young Lakota warrior.*

*Among the whites: Pastor CALEB THORNTON, who also serves as the mayor of Remedy; his wife DEBORAH, sitting in a primitive wheelchair, a blanket covering her lower half; their teen-aged daughter AZUBAH; and their son EZEKIEL, a year younger than Azubah.*

*Through this scene, Tashunka will spy covertly on Azubah.*

*Upstage, a large steamer trunk sits.*

*Chief Three Moon: Another year has passed, and the Lakota and our white neighbors have prospered once again. Naypayshni, come.*

*Naypayshni pads to his father's side.*

*Chief Three Moon: Caleb Thorntoan, my friend, present your son, please.*

*Caleb beckons his son, and they move to Chief Three Moon's side.*

*Chief Three Moon: These two hunters have once again filled our smokers with elk venison. Enough to last the winter. Caleb Thorntoan, if I had my way, I would make your son Ezekiel a Lakota warrior. He and my son Naypayshni are already as brothers.*

*This doesn't sit well with Deborah.*

*Caleb: My friend Chief Three Moon, as unlikely as that is, God has his own plans for us. So who knows?*

*All laugh.*

*Caleb: Allow me to present a gift to our Lakota brothers and sisters. (Caleb opens the trunk. He removes a length of thin rope) With this twine, and the bottled tallow inside this trunk, you can make candles, and light your teepees. We will show you how.*

*Matoskah, suspicious, peers inside the trunk and then examines the twine in Caleb's hands. Caleb offers the twine to the shaman, who takes it. Matoskah sniffs the twine.*

*Chief Three Moon: Thank you, Caleb. I saw candles once, at a French trapper's outpost. This is a fine, fine gift.*

*Azubah meets Tashunka's gaze, then looks away.*

*Chief Three Moon extends his palm to Matoskah, who hands him a pipe.*

*Chief Three Moon: Long ago, the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman came to Earth and gave the Lakota people a Sacred Pipe and a small round stone. These gifts were to be used in the first ritual, Keeping of the Soul, which she taught them. Then, she left the people saying, "There will be four ages, and I will look in on you once each age. At the end of the four ages, I will return." As she left, she changed from a beautiful maiden into a black buffalo...then a red-brown buffalo...then a yellow buffalo...and finally into a white buffalo. And then, she disappeared into the clouds. The bowl of the pipe she gave the Lakota was made of red stone, representing the Earth. A buffalo head was carved on*

the bowl, symbolizing all of the four-legged animals of the Earth. The stem was wood and represented all that grows on the Earth.

Chief Three Moon *hands the pipe to Caleb.*

*Caleb:* On behalf of the Christian community of Remedy, I accept your gift, Chief Three Moon. I noted that the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman prophesied her return. How many cultures the world over prophesy the return of a powerful savior?

*Matoskah:* We are well aware of your Christian mythology, Mister Thorntoan.

*Deborah:* We are slaves to no mythology, Matoskah.

*Chief Three Moon:* Let no quibbles mar this ceremony.

*Pause.*

*Caleb:* Ezekiel tells me he and Napayshni spotted a massive elk bull yesterday. Tomorrow they will seek him out, and bring hundreds more pounds of life-sustaining flesh to all of us!

*Raising their rifles, Napayshni and Ezekiel drape arms over each other's shoulders. All cheer.*

*Lights down.*

*SCREEN PROJECTION: A Montana sod house*

*Lights up, stage right, over interior of sod house. Sound of rain falling. Water from the sod house's roof drips into a bowl.*

*Young Azubah busies herself tending the fireplace, next to which sits a wooden bin. Sounds of fire crackling.*

*Deborah, the lower half of her body covered by a blanket, sits at a table on which rest a bowl and a plate. Deborah wipes the plate with a crust of bread and eats it.*

*Deborah:* Your cooking will make some man very happy, Azubah.

*Azubah:* Thank you, Mother. For now, I'm content to care for you.

*Deborah:* I didn't see my bluebird today. Did he come to the window?

*Azubah:* Just before the rain started.

*Deborah:* And my lizard?

*Azubah:* Too cold.

*Deborah:* I'm sorry. Would you mind--?

*Azubah lifts her mother and carries her to the bed, where she gently tucks her in.*

*Deborah:* Thank you, dear. This won't go on forever.

*Azubah:* Mother! I feel your humiliation and will not add to it.

*Deborah picks up a Bible from a bedstand and opens it.*

*Deborah (calling out):* Caleb?

*Pause.*

*Deborah:* Azubah. Where is your father?

*Azubah:* Making kindling.

*Deborah:* Caleb!

*Caleb enters, arms cradling firewood, his Indian blanket draped over his shoulders, dripping water. He drops the kindling into the bin by the fireplace.*

*Deborah:* You must repair this roof.

*Caleb:* Ezekiel will tend to it. When he returns.

*Lights down.*

*Sound of a rifle shot.*

*Stage left, lights up.*

*Ezekiel cradles the wounded Napayshni, a red bouquet blooming over the chest of his deer skin garment.*

*Ezekiel:* Brother Napayshni! Forgive me! Do not perish!

*Napayshni (sputtering):* Wakan Tanka...I am in your hands.

*Lights fade.*

*Lights up, stage center, illuminating the interior of a massive tepee.*

*CHIEF THREE MOON sharpens obsidian arrow heads with a stone.*

*MATOSKAH enters, dripping water.*

*Matoskah:* Honorable Chief Three Moon, Ezekiel approaches on horseback, leading the painted pony of Napayshini. Your son is draped over his pony.

*Chief Three Moon:* Napayshni must be exhausted. We will have meat.

*Matoskah:* My dream. I remind you of my dream. Sent by Wakan Tanka.

*From offstage, we hear cries and shouts.*

*Ezekiel enters, soaked by rain, carrying the dying Napayshni.*

*As Ezekiel lowers Napayshni to a bear skin...*

*Chief Three Moon:* My son!

*Ezekiel:* An accident.

*Chief Three Moon (examining the wound):* This is a bullet hole.

*Ezekiel:* A mist descended. I saw a shape.

*Chief Three Moon:* Matoskah! Gather your herbs! Save my son!

*Matoskah exits. Chief Three Moon cradles Napayshni as he whispers in his ear.*

*Ezekiel:* Chief Three Moon, I beg you forgive me. It was an accident.

*Chief Three Moon:* Go. Your father and I will meet soon.

*Lights fade.*

*SCREEN IMAGE: A photo, with or without humans in it, of a nineteenth century sod hut*

*Lights up, stage right.*

*Caleb and Ezekiel are repairing the sod hut's roof.*

*Ezekiel:* I am lying behind a mossy log. I smell the rotting leaves and pine needles as a mist falls upon the forest. I feel myself embraced by nature's blanket.

*Caleb:* Under God's protection, Ezekiel.

*Ezekiel:* I am connected to the mountains, Father, and the rivers and the deer and rabbits and bear and pheasants. I am thinking about you and Mama, and her accident. I am wondering if Azubah will find a good husband. I thank God for these facts of my life. For my friendship with Naypayshni. I hear branches crack below me. The mist obscures everything. I see movement down the ridge. I cannot call out to Naypayshni for fear of driving off the elk. I raise my rifle to my shoulder. I sight down the barrel. I wait for the mist to lift. For the shape to reveal itself. I send a prayer up to God, through Jesus. I think I see an antler. I discharge my bullet. I hear a human protest. A sigh, rising to a scream. "Ezekiel!" howls the voice. I fly down the slope, pine branches whipping my face. I trip and slide. Then there he is. My Lakota brother. Far off, I hear the rushing river.

*Caleb:* I believe the sod is sealed. Good job, my son.

*Ezekiel looks off in the distance.*

*Ezekiel:* Matoskah approaches.

*Lights fade.*

*Lights up, center stage.*

*Azubah cleans the room. Deborah sits in the bed, watching.*

*Caleb and Ezekiel sit while Matoskah paces.*

*Matoskah:* Send your wife and children outside, please.

*Caleb:* Your presence in my home means you have come with important news.

*Matoskah:* Yes.

*Caleb:* And it involves my family?

*Matoskah:* Yes.

*Caleb:* Then, begging your pardon, they will stay.

*Pause.*

*Matoskah:* I have consulted with Wakan Tanka. I have discussed my findings with Chief Three Moon.

*Pause.*

*Matoskah:* Wakan Tanka teaches us justice. He keeps our world in balance. Your son has tipped our world into chaos.

*Ezekiel:* It was an ac--

*Caleb:* Silence! Matoskah is our guest.

*Matoskah:* Chief Three Moon is devastated. His only son is dead.

*Caleb:* Our Father in heaven, we ask that you---

*Matoskah:* NO! Your God and his lamb have no dominion in this matter!

*Caleb:* Then my congregation and I will grieve in our way, tomorrow.

*Matoskah:* You will also grieve the loss of your son.

*Caleb:* Pardon me?

*Matoskah:* Chief Three Moon has ordered me to return with your son in hand, to be executed as we mourn Naypayshni.

*Caleb:* You are Satan in disguise!

*Matoskah:* I am Matoskah, Seer for Wakan Tanka. Loyal servant of Chief Three Moon. Wakan Tanka says your son is a trickster demon.

*Deborah:* NO! When on our journey west, I stepped into an Ojibwa bear trap while seeking raspberries, stuck there over night, screaming for help, losing my legs to amputation, did we demand retribution? WE FORGAVE THE OJIBWA!

*Matoskah (snorting derisively):* The Ojibwa are dogs. We will destroy them one day.

*Deborah:* MY STUMPS ARE ROTTING! WE FORGAVE THE OJIBWA!

*Matoskah:* They are dog people. Now. NOW: Lakota justice demands I return with your son. Failure to respect Chief Three Moon's wishes, as sanctioned by Wakan Tanka, will engender serious consequences.

*Caleb:* We will pray to God for guidance. Until then, I beg you return to my friend Chief Three Moon. With my utmost condolences and sympathy.

*Matoskah departs.*

*Azubah:* What will we do, Father?

*Caleb:* I will seek guidance from our Father. We must maintain our daily disciplines. Daughter, go to the hillsides and seek berries.

*Lights fade.*

*Lights up, stage left.*

*Azubah kneels, singing a Christian hymn, picking berries and placing them in a bucket.*

*Azubah (singing):* Lord, send us a remedy. Lord, send us a remedy. / Save us from our enemy. Send us some serenity. / Lord, send us a remedy. Lord, send us a remedy.

*The Lakota warrior TASHUNKA appears, unseen by Azubah. He listens, entranced.*

*Azubah (still singing):* Your night in Gethsemane is more than a memory. / We suffered the original wound. / Now let forgiving roses bloom.

*Tashunka leaps from the shadows and throws Azubah over his shoulder.*

*Azubah screams. Tashunka carries the writhing Azubah away.*

*Lights fade.*

*Lights up, stage right.*

*Pretty Nose:* My father Caleb educated me well. I read Greek history as a child, in the original Greek. I was Helen of Troy, abducted by Paris. Helen's abduction brought about the Trojan War.

*Lights fade.*

*Lights up, center stage, a setting sun.*

*A Lakota death scaffold carries the corpse of Naypayshni, on his back, facing the sky. Hanging from the scaffold are Naypayshni's earthly possessions: his rifle, a feathered war bonnet, bone and shell necklaces, animal skin garments, etc.*

*Chief Three Moon, flanked by Matoskah, faces stage front, stage right of the scaffold. Stage left of the scaffold stand Tashunka and Azubah. A noose encircles Azubah's neck, and the rope leads to Tashunka's fist. Azubah's hands are tied behind her back.*

*Chief Three Moon:* The Great Mystery Wakan Tanka, Ruler of the Four Directions, reclaims everything. Today, my son Naypayshni returns to Wakan Tanka. Carrion birds will disperse Naypayshni's flesh across these plains and mountains. But Naypayshni's spirit will hover over the Lakota forever.

*Pause. We hear, offstage (or through the sound system), drums beaten, rattles shaken.*

*Chief Three Moon:* We have a witness, the daughter of personal friend Caleb Thornton: Azubah.

*Offstage, murmurs of outrage. Tashunka holds off his unseen tribesmen with an upraised palm.*

*Chief Three Moon:* Azubah is our guest, guarded by Tashunka, who will treat her well. Azubah will return home when her brother Ezekiel is given to us so that Wakan Tanka may be appeased. Wakan Tanka demands balance from all Four Directions! The earth has tilted. Soon balance will return.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage right.*

*Caleb Thornton delivers a sermon to the people of Remedy. At various points, we will hear, offstage (or through the theater's sound system) cries of "Amen!"*

*Caleb:* Let us pray together. O Lord, teach us now, not only the idea that if we suffer with you we will reign with you. Give us the readiness of soul to embrace whatever is true. In Jesus' name, when the Chief Shepherd appears, we will receive the unfading Crown of Glory. God opposes the proud and yields grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, and the mighty hand of God will exalt you! For God wishes us transcendent joy. Joy! While we endure this current calamity. Joy! Our submission to His will brings us joy! And the peace that surpasses understanding.



*Pause.*

*Caleb:* The Devil prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him! I pray to God for His guidance through this crucible. Exodus 33:12. “Then Moses said to the Lord, ‘See, You say to me, “Bring up this people.” But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’” We have grace in His sight. Let us pray to our Father in Heaven, to soften the hearts of our Lakota brothers, to return our sister Azubah to us, to forgive our brother Ezekiel, so that we may return once more to the harmony that enriched our lives here in the Montana Territory.

*Lights down.*

*Caleb (in the darkness):* Jesus Christ soars above us in the grandeur of God, in great galaxies of hope!

*Lights up, stage left.*

*Tashunka's teepee. Tashunka, offering a bowl, crouches by the reclining Azubah, her hands still tied behind her back.*

*Tashunka:* Eat. Azubah.

*Azubah:* Untie me.

*Tashunka scoops some gruel from the bowl and brings it to Azubah's lips. Tight-lipped Azubah shakes her head.*

*Tashunka:* You must eat.

*Azubah:* I will feed myself. Untie me.

*Tashunka:* Your nose. It is beautiful.

*Azubah:* Release these bonds.

*Tashunka:* Permit me to call you Pretty Nose. Then I will free your hands.

*Azubah:* Call me what you wish. I have no means of protest.

*Tashunka:* Pretty Nose. Turn. Present the knot to me.

*Azubah stares at Tashunka.*

*Then she rolls over, presenting the knotted rope.*

*Tashunka:* I will re-tie you every night. During daylight, you will be closely observed.

*Azubah nods. Tashunka unties the knot.*

*Tashunka:* Now sing for me. Please.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage right, the Thornton home.*

*We hear Azubah singing over this scene:*

Azubah: Lord send us a remedy. Lord send us a remedy. / Give love to our enemy. / Please love him most tenderly. / We suffered the original wound. / Now let forgiving roses bloom.

*Caleb kneels by his marital bed, in which Deborah sits upright.*

*Caleb:* Our Father in heaven, instruct us, please, guide us through this crucible you have erected.

*Ezekiel enters and watches, unseen by his parents.*

*Deborah:* You who are all-knowing, we accept your faultless conclusions. We beg you for mercy. For the integrity to bear with dignity your will.

*Caleb, Deborah and Ezekiel:* We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Caleb:* Ezekiel. Come with me.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, center stage.*

*On the screen:* Photo of Devil's Tower (*It's a round butte with made of octagonal, vertical pencil-shaped bundles, similar to California's Devil's Postpile*)

*Sounds of wind on a mountaintop.*

*Tashunka shakes Azubah awake.*

*Azubah:* Yes?

*Tashunka:* Time to meet Cetan (*pronounced "Che-than"*).

*Azubah:* Satan?

*Tashunka:* The Hawk Man.

*Azubah (looking around):* Where are we?

*Tashunka:* Atop Devil's Tower.

*As Azubah stands and walks about...*

*Tashunka:* A group of girls went out to play. Several bears chased them. The girls climbed atop a rock,

then fell to their knees asking Wakan Tanka to save them. Wakan Tanka made the rock rise toward the heavens. The bears tried to climb the tower, only to leave their claw marks streaking down the sides. The girls rose to the heavens to form the constellation Pleiades.

*Azubah:* We saw this tower on our journey west.

*CETAN alights. He is part man, part hawk.*

*Tashunka:* Greetings, Cetan.

*Cetan:* This is the white girl?

*Tashunka:* Yes.

*Cetan:* You wish to marry her?

*Tashunka:* Yes.

*Cetan wraps his wings around Azubah.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage left.*

*A meadow.*

*Sounds of mountain wind.*

*Caleb and Ezekiel enter.*

*Caleb:* I have always loved this meadow.

*Ezekiel:* You brought me here one night to explain a point of Scripture.

*Caleb:* Then we named the constellations. You knew the Pleiades. I was so proud of you.

*Caleb drapes an arm over Ezekiel's shoulder.*

*Ezekiel:* Why are we here, Father?

*Caleb:* Joshua 20:1-9: 'Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Say to the people of Israel, 'Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the manslayer who strikes any person without intent or unknowingly may flee there. They shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood. He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and explain his case to the elders of that city. Then they shall take him into the city and give him a place, and he shall remain with them. And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not give up the manslayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unknowingly, and did not hate him in the past.'

*Ezekiel:* I will not run.

*Caleb:* My son. My only son. Your mother is dying. I can't bear that--

*Ezekiel:* I will not abandon my sister!

*Caleb:* I AM GOING MAD! O Lord, why do you torment us so? Have I not been your loyal servant? I led thirty-eight Christians to this place! We now number eighty-three! I made peace with the Lakota! And now you do *this* to me?

*Pause.*

*Ezekiel:* Do you recall what you said when we studied *Hamlet*?

*Caleb:* Most men seek God like Hamlet seeking Shakespeare. What of it?

*Ezekiel:* God has assigned you a role. You must not shirk it. *(Beat)* I have a plan. I will find Azubah and bring her back.

*Caleb:* Now you are the mad one.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage right.*

*The Thornton sod house.*

*Deborah sits, covered by her blanket, by the window, looking out.*

*Matoskah paces as Caleb and Ezekiel listen to him.*

*Matoskah:* Failure to turn your son over to us will not only result in your daughter's death...the Lakota will declare war on you. You will be annihilated. Give us one to save eighty-three.

*Caleb:* Relay this to Chief Three Moon: As a show of good faith, I will come to him for further talk.

*Deborah looks at the window.*

*Deborah:* My lizard! On the sill!

*Matoskah regards Deborah.*

*Matoskah:* The woman does not pay attention.

*Ezekiel:* Nothing gets by her, Matoskah.

*Deborah (to Matoskah):* I know you, heathen. I forgive you. You are not responsible for your ignorance.

*Caleb embraces Deborah.*

*Matoskah:* I know you are very ill. The sickness has afflicted your mind.

*Caleb:* Go. Tell my friend the chief that I will appear at noon tomorrow. *(Beat)* Azubah is well?

*Matoskah:* She is under the able protection of Tashunka. One of our best warriors.

*Matoskah exits.*

*Ezekiel:* I know Tashunka. He is a good man. And I know which teepee is his.

*Deborah:* Matoskah practices the Dark Arts. *(She looks out the window)* My bluebird!

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage left. Tashunka's teepee.*

*Tashunka and Azubah sit crosslegged, facing each other.*

*Tashunka:* I want something on my face to show. Unlock my face. I want to be strong through my chest. I hold my face together.

*Azubah:* There is a higher power holding you together.

*Tashunka:* Wakan Tanka.

*Azubah:* I believe in a power even higher.

*Tashunka:* There is no power greater than Wakan Tanka.

*Azubah:* May I speak? At some length? Your soul is in danger.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, center stage. The Lakota Council House.*

*Chief Three Moon sits regally.*

*Caleb Thornton enters. Chief Three Moon rises and embraces Caleb.*

*Chief Three Moon:* Welcome, friend! *(He offers Caleb a strip of meat)* Please. Smoked bison.

*Caleb takes the bison jerky and bites off a healthy chunk.*

*Caleb:* May I pray? *(Chief Three Moon nods. Caleb kneels)* Heavenly Father, grant this honorable man and me a productive meeting, free of rancor. Soften our hearts. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Chief Three Moon:* Sit. Please.

*The two men sit opposite each other.*

*Chief Three Moon:* You are well?

*Caleb:* Burdened. What are we to do?

*Chief Three Moon:* Wakan Tanka demands restitution.

*Caleb:* Excuse my ignorance, sir. I mean no disrespect. Who is Wakan Tanka?

*Chief Three Moon:* We went over this several years ago.

*Caleb:* Humor me.

*Chief Three Moon:* While you were—what did you call it?—*evangelizing* me.

*Caleb:* Obviously in vain.

*Chief Three Moon:* Apparently my attempt to explain Wakan Tanka was equally in vain. You were so busy talking at me.

*Caleb:* I apologize, sir.

*Chief Three Moon:* Wakan Tanka is the Great Mystery who rules this world.

*Chief Three Moon* *knows he has issued a challenge to Caleb, and studies his counterpart.*

*Caleb:* You know I am bound to disagree.

*Chief Three Moon:* Yes, you with your talking snake and Holy Book full of death.

*Caleb:* That talking snake was Satan in disguise. The tempter.

*Chief Three Moon:* We are not so far apart. We have a talking animal. Cetan. Cetan, who can assume many shapes. Normally, he is a hawk. But Matoskah tells me Cetan has appeared at your home.

*Caleb:* He has?

*Chief Three Moon:* As a bluebird. As a lizard. On your very windowsill. Cetan watches over your wife.

*Caleb:* My wife is watched over by Jesus Christ.

*Chief Three Moon:* Who permits her to die.

*Caleb:* His ways are mysterious to us.

*Chief Three Moon:* Ah, the Great Mystery. We have much in common, you and I. *(Beat)* Except for this. We are both fathers of sons. Or, more truthfully: I was once the father of a son. Now, no more. Your son killed my son.

*Caleb:* Do you believe it was an accident?

*Chief Three Moon:* You once explained to me, while attempting to persuade me to abandon Wakan Tanka, that your God wills all results.

*Caleb:* That is true.

*Chief Three Moon:* Did your God will the death of my son?

*Caleb ponders a reply. He can find none.*

*Caleb:* How is my daughter?

*Chief Three Moon:* The happy recipient of Lakota hospitality. The same hospitality we extended you and your people when you arrived here.

*Caleb:* May I see her?

*Chief Three Moon (calling out):* Bring the girl!

*Caleb:* You know I am bound to obey Jesus Christ.

*Chief Three Moon:* I am aware of my advantage.

*Caleb:* In this place, yes. In these earthly circumstances. But this world is not all there is.

*Azubah enters, wearing Lakota garb. Caleb leaps up and crosses to Azubah. They embrace.*

*Caleb:* Daughter, daughter, daughter.

*Azubah:* I am well, Father. I pray daily for a resolution to this predicament. And Mother is--?

*Caleb:* Heartbroken.

*Azubah:* Pray for wisdom, Father. Remember Jesus commands us to radiate joy in all circumstances. Do the right thing.

*Caleb:* And what is that?

*Azubah:* Our Lord knows. Ask Him.

*Chief Three Moon:* Now return to Tashunka's teepee.

*Azubah:* Farewell, Father.

*Caleb:* For now, Azubah. God willing.

*Azubah:* God willing.

*Azubah exits.*

*Caleb:* Have you forced my daughter to cross over?

*Pause.*

*Chief Three Moon:* You have two days to hand your son to us. Otherwise, we will annihilate every one of you. My warriors hunger for white scalps.

*Caleb:* This is your final word?

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage right.*

*The Thornton sod house. Deborah, her bottom half covered by the blanket, sits by the window.*

*Caleb enters, raging.*

*Caleb:* What are you doing there?

*Deborah:* Waiting for my friends.

*Caleb:* Your bluebird and your lizard? Your friends? They are nothing more than--

*Caleb catches himself. He can't possibly buy into Lakotan mythology. He fights to still his heavy breathing.*

*Caleb:* I will shutter this window.

*Deborah:* But it is not yet winter.

*Caleb paces, a coiled spring.*

*Deborah:* Did it go badly?

*Caleb:* They have garbed our daughter in the savages' finery!

*Caleb slams his right fist into a wall. He howls in pain.*

*Deborah:* Husband! What possesses you?

*Caleb:* They forced our daughter into buckskin.

*Deborah:* That is the sorcerer Matoskah's doing!

*Caleb:* We have two days before the Lakota overrun us. I must call a council and discuss this with the congregation. Where is Ezekiel?



*Deborah:* He said he needed air. *(Beat)* Tend to your hand.

*Caleb:* His rifle is missing. Did he need it to take fresh air?

*Deborah:* In case he spotted some game.

*Caleb:* Forgive me, wife. *(He snuggles next to Deborah)* How fare you?

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage left. Tashunka's teepee. Night. A tallow candle burns.*

*Tashunka and Azubah lay together, spooning, Azubah in front, facing away from the teepee's entry way flap.*

*Tashunka:* Sleep well, Pretty Nose.

*Azubah is already sleeping.*

*Tashunka:* When we are tangled up in love, is it me you're whispering to, or some other?

*Tashunka drifts off.*

*The teepee's flap silently stirs. A rifle barrel slides through the opening. Ezekiel peers in. He sees the two lovers entwined.*

*His wheels spin as Ezekiel tries to comprehend the scene. He must decide what to do.*

*Ezekiel withdraws his head. The rifle barrel slides out. Silently, the teepee flap closes.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage right. Night in the sod house.*

*Caleb, his right hand bandaged, massages Deborah's thighs.*

*Ezekiel enters, carrying his rifle.*

*Caleb:* How is the air?

*Ezekiel:* Pardon me?

*Caleb:* You were taking in some fresh air.

*Ezekiel:* I cannot lie to you, Father. I went to rescue Azubah.

*Deborah:* Where is my daughter?

*Ezekiel:* The whore lays with Tashunka the savage.

*Caleb:* And you did not pry her from his grip?

*Deborah weeps.*

*Ezekiel:* She does not merit rescue.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, center stage.*

*Caleb, flanked by Ezekiel, addresses his congregation.*

*We hear a crowd's commotion from offstage, or through the sound system.*

*Caleb (banging his gavel):* Silence, please! Please... *(The commotion subsides)* As the mayor of Remedy, I must maintain order. Our situation is dire. We must consider every option. We have no military protection. Only our hunting rifles and pistols. Since our inception, we have relied on our Heavenly Father, and on our Lakota hosts, for peace.

*Offstage Voices:* Masada! Masada! On Devil's Tower!

*Caleb:* I hear calls for a final siege.

*Offstage Voices:* Pack up and flee!

*Caleb:* Full scale retreat? Please bear in mind my daughter is held hostage.

*Offstage Voices:* She fornicates with savages!

*Caleb:* God will forgive her!

*Ezekiel raises his hand. He brings silence.*

*Ezekiel:* I offer myself in sacrifice.

*Offstage Voices:* NO!

*Ezekiel:* John 15:13: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. *(Offstage buzzing)* You all are more than friends. You are my Christian brothers and sisters. I am already assured a place in heaven. I will simply arrive ahead of you, and will wait an eternity if need be.

*Offstage Voices:* We will not hand you over to the savages!

*Pause.*

*Caleb:* I will administer the sacrifice.

*Ezekiel:* Father! No!

*Caleb:* Our Father in heaven, we beg your guidance. Who shall reap this whirlwind?

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage left, Tashunka's teepee.*

*Tashunka and Azubah sit crosslegged, facing each other.*

*Tashunka:* War is inevitable.

*Azubah:* My father will negotiate with Chief Three Moon. They will reach a compromise.

*Tashunka:* I have witnessed Matoskah spinning his web around our chief. He draws a hard line. Your father will never turn over his son. Your brother.

*Azubah:* I do not fear this world's death.

*Tashunka:* I would die without you. I would die defending you. *(Beat)* You have spoken beautifully of Philadelphia. And of the documents written there.

*Azubah:* We call it "The City of Brotherly Love."

*Tashunka:* I wish to return you to your original people.

*Azubah:* My original people are in Remedy.

*Tashunka:* The Lakota will annihilate them. Face reality, my noble Azubah.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage right. The sod house.*

*Caleb tends the fire. Deborah sits in bed. Ezekiel cleans his rifle.*

*Matoskah pulls some leaves from a pouch. He offers them to Deborah.*

*Matoskah:* Boil these leaves and drink the potion, Missus Thorntoan.

*Deborah:* Thank you, Matoskah. But no.

*Matoskah:* Do you not wish relief from your suffering?

*Deborah:* How can I know these herbs will not induce your shaman's visions? Or that they are laced with arsenic?

*Matoskah:* You trouble me, Missus Thorntoan.

*Caleb:* Matoskah, we obey a power greater than herbs. We thank you for your generosity. We must decline.

*Matoskah:* I wished to soften the blow of my larger intentions. I have come for your son.

*Caleb:* I will not surrender Ezekiel. Tell Chief Three Moon I have a plan that will satisfy Wakan Tanka.

*Matoskah:* As you wish. Prepare to meet your Jesus on the morrow.

*Matoskah exits.*

*Ezekiel rises, his rifle at the ready.*

*Caleb:* No, my son. Let him go.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage left. Tashunka's teepee.*

*Tashunka packs his belongings into a leather pouch.*

*Tashunka:* I have two horses at the ready.

*Azubah:* We'll need extra blankets.

*Tashunka:* The Lakota meet with the people of Remedy tomorrow. I will steal all we need as they prepare and are distracted.

*Pause.*

*Tashunka:* Sing to me.

*Lights down.*

*On the screen: Image of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Montana church*

*Center stage. Remedy's town square in front of the church. Night.*

*We hear a portion of "Convergence" from Johnny Greenwood's score of BODYSONG.*

*A winged figure leaps into the space.*

*As the winged figure spreads its wings, the lights go slowly up, revealing Cetan.*

*Cetan steps to each corner of the space, shaking a wing at each of the Four Directions, as though tossing holy water.*

*Lights down as "Convergence" fades into silence.*

*On the screen: Image of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Montana church*

*Lights up.*

*Center stage, Remedy's town square in front of the church. Day.*

*Caleb stands behind Ezekiel, his hands resting on his son's shoulders. Deborah sits in a chair, her blanket over her bottom half. Ezekiel's rifle sits, propped up.*

*Chief Three Moon stands to the family's right; Matoskah, to the family's left.*

*All are dressed formally, with the Lakotans decked in royal plumage.*

*Caleb:* Welcome Chief Three Moon, Matoskah, and all of our Lakota guests. Welcome to the congregation of Remedy. We are gathered here for a grim occasion, yet Jesus demands we be joyful. How can this be? My son Ezekiel accidentally killed his friend Napayshni while hunting for food to feed us all. Our Lakota guests grieve, justifiably. To lose a son---(Beat)--before his prime, is perhaps the most difficult burden a man can bear. Lakota spiritualism demands a redress. Jesus Christ demands we forgive. The Lakota do not forgive. They are not Christians. Though we meet their demands under duress, we will maintain peace and welcome our beloved Azubah home. (Beat) Where is my daughter?

*Chief Three Moon:* She has departed.

*Deborah:* Departed? As in dead?

*Chief Three Moon:* She and Tashunka have fled.

*Caleb:* How can we possibly conclude our treaty?

*Chief Three Moon:* My warriors are massed on that ridge. (All look stage left, upward) Your daughter has chosen to abandon you. This is not our concern. Please proceed.

*Caleb:* My wife and I will have lost two children by sundown.

*Chief Three Moon:* In your shoes, I would choose to see it as having gained a son-in-law.

*Matoskah snickers.*

*Deborah:* May I speak?

*Caleb:* Yes, wife. Proceed.

On the screen, we will see each line flashing to correspond to the line Deborah will speak in Lakotan: "Our Father, which art in heaven, / Hallowed be thy Name. / Thy Kingdom come. / Thy will be done in earth, / As it is in heaven. / Give us this day our daily bread. / And forgive us our trespasses, / As we forgive them that trespass against us. / And lead us not into temptation, / But deliver us from evil. / For thine is the kingdom, / The power, and the glory, / For ever and ever. / Amen."

*Deborah:* Ate unyanpi, mahpiya ekta nanke cin, Nicaje wakandapi nunwe. Nitokiconze u nunwe. Mahpiya ekta nitawacin econpi kin, He iyecen maka akan econpi nunwe. Anpetu iyohi aguyapi kin, anpetu kin de unqu miye. Qa tona ecinsniyan ecaunkiconpi wicunkicicajujupi kin, He iyecen waunhtanipi kin unkcicajuju miye. Qa taku wawiyutanye cin ekta un kayapi sni miye; tka taku sice cin etanhan eunkdaku miye. Amen.

*Matoskah:* How dare you!

*Chief Three Moon:* Indulge the Christian woman. She is not well.

*Caleb:* Ezekiel?

*Ezekiel:* This earth is a mere prelude to eternal life at the side of our Heavenly Father. Though I love this life, and all of you, I rejoice that I will soon join my Holy Father.

*Ezekiel kneels, facing Caleb. He pulls a bandana from his trousers. He wraps the bandana around his head, covering his eyes.*

*Deborah:* Corinthians 5:8: “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

*Chief Three Moon:* Ezekiel.

*Ezekiel:* Yes?

*Chief Three Moon:* Wakan Tanka praises your noble fate.

*Deborah:* Keep your superstitions out of this!

*Chief Three Moon:* Does your Holy Book not contain a story in which your God orders a man, Abraham, to murder his son?

*Deborah:* Do not fling Scripture in my face, barbarian!

*Caleb:* Let us proceed. *(He lifts the rifle)* Holy Father, you command us not to kill, yet I, your messenger on earth, shall commit the gravest sin. Forgive me. *(He lowers the barrel toward Ezekiel)*

*Deborah:* NO! *(She plunges off her chair and drags herself on her belly toward her son)* Shoot me!

*Deborah interposes herself between the rifle and Ezekiel.*

*Chief Three Moon:* Matoskah!

*Matoskah lunges toward Deborah. He wrestles her out of the path of the soon-to-come bullet.*

*Caleb brings the rifle to Ezekiel's chest.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up, stage right, on Pretty Nose.*

*Pretty Nose:* Years later, I received a letter from my father as he lay dying from the typhoid brought to Montana by the United States Cavalry inside its blankets.

*We hear a rifle shot, followed by Deborah's screaming and wailing.*

*Pretty Nose:* My mother died shortly after the execution of my brother.

*An OLD INDIAN enters, stage right, and stands next to Pretty Nose.*

*Pretty Nose:* Tashunka and I never made it to Philadelphia. We headed south, to the Cochiti Pueblo in what is now New Mexico. We founded a Christian school for Native Americans. Our several children manage the Academy. One of our graduates is now a state senator.

*Tashunka:* Will you sing for me, Pretty Nose?

*Pretty Nose (singing):* Lord, send us a remedy. Lord, send us a remedy. / Save us from our enemy. Send us some serenity.

*The lights begin to fade. They stop fading.*

*Lights up over centerstage, as the lights, stage right, also go up.*

*All other cast members stand centerstage. Facing the audience. As Pretty Nose sings, they link arms.*

*Pretty Nose (still singing):* Lord, send us a remedy. Lord, send us a remedy. Your night in Gethsemane is more than a memory.

*Lights fade to black.*

*Pretty Nose (still singing):* We suffered the original wound. / Now let forgiving roses bloom.

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<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Lakota/hc1.html>  
come thou font of every blessing [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax\\_NMWLEb6U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax_NMWLEb6U)

Come, Thou fount of every blessing,

Tune my heart to sing Thy grace,  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
While the hope of endless glory  
Fills my heart with joy and love,  
Teach me ever to adore Thee,  
May I still Thy goodness prove.