

# *SAINT SUSAN*

(For Readers Theatre)

by Marsha L. Grant (c) 2002

## CAST

(Flexible 8-9 women, 1 or more men)

MARTHA CAREY THOMAS/NARRATOR, age 40 or older  
SUSAN B. ANTHONY, age 70-80 (designated ANTHONY in the script)  
ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, age 70-80 (STANTON in the script)  
SUSAN B. ANTHONY, age 35-50 (SUSAN in the script)  
ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, age 35-50 (ELIZ in the script)  
SOJOURNER TRUTH, African-American, age 50 or older  
SARA, African-American, age 20 or older  
DAR WOMAN/CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT, age 40 or older  
PHOEBE PHELPS, age 45-55  
DAVIES, president of the NY State teachers convention, age 50 or older  
GREELEY, age 50-70  
JUDGE HUNT, age 50 or older  
REPORTER/MAN IN AUDIENCE

It is recommended that 4 actors play the roles of the elder and younger Stanton and Anthony as indicated in the cast list. The roles of the Reporter, the Man in the audience, Davies, Greeley, and Judge Hunt may be played by a single male actor. The roles of Sojourner and Sara may be played by a single actor.

The time period covers 1851 to 1920; running time approx. 60 minutes. Victorian costumes are not essential but highly recommended as they contribute to the sense of history and add color and flair to the performance. Sojourner should wear a white blouse and long skirt with a colorful turban. Sara would wear servants garb. Donning an apron and replacing the turban with a scarf makes a quick change of costume if a single actor plays Sojourner and Sara. It follows the dialogue for Stanton, the younger, to wear Miss Bloomer's new costume, circa 1855. The DAR woman might wear a large-brimmed, ornate hat, and a DAR banner across her chest, then remove the banner and wear a 1920 cloche for the role of Catt. Except for the multi-role scenes, actors should be seated when not speaking.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

To maintain historical accuracy and the style of 19<sup>th</sup> century English in America, the dialogue was frequently excerpted from speeches, letters, and diaries written by Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Ernestine Rose, Isabella Beecher Hooker, Martha Carey Thomas, Carrie Chapman Catt, Lucy Stone, and transcriptions of speeches given by Sojourner Truth. Source materials were:

*Susan B. Anthony, A Biography*, by Kathleen Barry.  
*The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, by Ida Husted Harper.  
*The History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol I-IV, by Anthony, Stanton, Harper  
*Eighty Years and More*, by Elizabeth Cady Stanton  
*Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection; [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)*  
*The Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, ed. Ann D. Gordon, et al (Columbia, SC: Model Editions Partnership, 1999) <http://adh.sc.edu>  
Trial transcript, *United States vs. Susan B. Anthony*, 1873

The readers theatre script is an adaptation of my 3-act play *Saint Susan* (c)1998, produced by Epilogue Players, Indianapolis IN, March 2002, and May 2004. The adaptation was first presented at a combined meeting of the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women in Indianapolis, and subsequently performed at the AAUW Indiana State conference in French Lick IN, and the Midwest Regional (5-state) conference in Grand Rapids, MI. It has been presented at high schools, colleges, and churches, as well as LWV and AAUW chapter meetings throughout Indiana. In June 2004, the 3-act play was the featured entertainment at the AAUW 15-state conference in Indianapolis. Members of the original cast and the author have received several awards from community theatre organizations in central Indiana.

*Saint Susan* is a living history lesson to enlighten and remind us of our foremothers' tragedies and triumphs during the early days of the woman's suffrage movement. Few people realize how greatly these suffragettes influenced higher education, working conditions, and legal rights for women before the turn of the twentieth century. Yet these remarkable women were not unlike ourselves--they laughed, cried, delighted and despaired, raised families, and best of all were driven to correct the inequities accorded one half the citizens of these United States.

A published interview by Nellie Bly in 1896 gives us a sense of Anthony's personality: "In disposition (Susan) is very lovable... always good-natured and sunny tempered. She has a remarkable memory and in speaking is both eloquent and witty. She keeps an audience laughing... enjoys a good joke and can tell one. She never fails to see the funny side of things though it be at her own expense."

*[1900, Washington D.C., Susan B. Anthony's 80th birthday celebration.]*

THOMAS/NARRATOR: Ladies and Gentlemen, some movements in history have been brought about by the stroke of a pen, some by the sudden uprising of the people; others have come slowly as the result of years of effort, and represent the gradual growth of conviction. In 1851 Miss Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote the trumpet calls to freedom that began and carried forward the emancipation of women. For the next fifty years Miss Anthony gave to the Cause every year, every day, every moment of her life, and every dollar she could beg or earn. We, your daughters in the spirit, rise and called you blessed.

*[Actors rise and applaud as ANTHONY steps forward]*

ANTHONY: I wish you could realize with what joy and relief I retire from the presidency of the Woman's Suffrage Association, not because I am unable to do the work--I am good for at least another decade, and Yankee enough to watch every potato that goes in the pot--but because I wish to see the organization in the hands of those who will manage it in the future, and scold them if they do not do it well. A great many doors are now open to us. But the one that assures us the greatest freedom of all is still firmly shut. So, my friends, you'll find me stumping the halls of Congress, and smack-dab in the middle of every quadrennial bluster until the United States ratifies the 16<sup>th</sup> amendment-giving women the right to vote. *(applause)* Now, gentlemen, you may commence your attack.

REPORTER: Miss Anthony, surely you have seen how degrading politics can be. I can't believe that any refined and delicate woman would willingly tread its muddy waters.

ANTHONY: Since politics in this country has been the sole territory of men for the past hundred years, is your confession one of success or failure?

REPORTER: Ladies and gentlemen, let us not forget that the founding fathers of this Republic extended the franchise to those citizens they felt worthy and capable of assuming the grave responsibilities of government.

ANTHONY: In New York and Ohio the franchise is extended to anyone twenty-one years of age, with the exception of idiots, lunatics, and convicts. Now I ask you, sir, into which category would you place your wife?

REPORTER: Miss Anthony, do you believe that women will ever have full suffrage in this country?

ANTHONY: I most assuredly do! We can no more deny the right of self-government to one-half our people than we could keep the Negro in bondage. It will not be wrought by the same disrupting forces that freed the slave, but it will come. I have been attending woman's rights conventions here in Washington for thirty years, and have presided over a great many of them. The honors you bestow upon me in my 80<sup>th</sup> year I accept not for myself, but in the name of the Cause. During the fifty years I have worked to advance it, I have been jeered, ridiculed, cut down, and vilified, but all that dims before the bright young faces I see before me, dedicated young women who will carry it forward after I am gone. If I have one regret, it's that Mrs. Stanton is not with us today. I would have accomplished nothing without her.

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*[At this point Anthony could help Elizabeth Cady Stanton to her feet, or sit next to her taking her hand. Stanton is quite ill, blind, & wears a shawl and lace cap.]*

ANTHONY: How are you feeling today, Mrs. Stanton?

STANTON: The same as yesterday and the day before. An agile brain trapped in a useless body. Did they ask about me?

ANTHONY: You were sorely missed.

STANTON: They thought it strange, no doubt...

ANTHONY: *(jokingly)* That we were not joined at the hip?

STANTON: They will erect a bronze statue of you.

ANTHONY: Oh, to stand exposed in a public park, green with mold and covered with pigeon droppings... please God, I hope not!

STANTON: Are you superstitious?

ANTHONY: No, never! But, I never see the new moon that I don't stop to notice whether I see it over the right or left shoulder. What a curious question. Why do you ask?

STANTON: After all these years, I have suddenly come to realize that there is still a great deal I don't know about you. What is your favorite hymn?

ANTHONY: (*laughing*) The dickens, Mrs. Stanton! I don't know. I can't tell one tune from another.

STANTON: Your favorite flower?

ANTHONY: I like roses first and Pinks second. I don't call anything a flower that hasn't a sweet perfume.

STANTON: Are you afraid of death?

ANTHONY: Thirteen years ago when my sister, Hannah, died I was silent in the face of death. Scarcely a day goes by that I have not felt her loss. She was so certain that we would meet in the great beyond, I could not dash her faith with my doubts. But since no particle of matter is ever lost, I feel that no particle of the mind is lost either, and I am just as much in the hands of eternity now as when the breath goes out of my body.

STANTON: It's reassuring to hear you say so, my Susan of much practical wisdom. These young women, the ones taking over for us... will they understand what we tried to do?

ANTHONY: We were the seed-sowers, Mrs. Stanton. They will reap the harvest. Each of them is valiant, earnest, and talented. They will manage the ship quite well.

STANTON: I fear that they have forgotten me, my small contributions...

ANTHONY: Mrs. Stanton, you are the mother of us all. Without you, I would have been but a voice crying in the wilderness.

STANTON: What a pair we made. You, a quiet, dignified Quaker girl... and I, a plump, jolly matron. My dear, I liked you thoroughly from the beginning. Whenever I saw my stately friend striding across the lawn, I knew that the sons of Adam would soon be set on their ears.

ANTHONY: We complemented one another, did better work together than either of us could have done alone.

STANTON: Although I was the better writer...

ANTHONY: And I the better critic. You were so bold and flamboyant, hair bobbed in the modern style and outfitted in Miss Bloomer's new costume.

STANTON: Humph! I was nursing my fourth, and you were a constant thorn in my side, urging me to get back into the fray.

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*[The younger Susan and Elizabeth, age 30 & 35 pick up the story.]*

SUSAN: Mrs. Stanton, it grieves me no end that you give yourself over to baby making, and leave poor, brainless me to do battle alone.

ELIZ: Susan, stop! Say not one more word, for I swear to you that while I am tending my babies, I shall not be tormented with suffering humanity.

SUSAN: You have one babe in the cradle and three at your knee. How long must I await your pleasure?

ELIZ: Patience, my dear. You and I have the prospect of a good long life. We shall not be in our prime before fifty.

SUSAN: I refuse to spend the next twenty years sitting quietly through male dominated meetings.

ELIZ: Oh, I know! It brings me to the boiling point! I feel that if I cannot use my tongue on important issues, I shall die of intellectual repression... a woman's rights convulsion. Now tell me, what did the "gentlemen" accomplish at the temperance conference?

SUSAN: The first day was spent crowding a woman off the platform; the second day, gagging her; and the third, voting that she remain gagged.

ELIZ: Did she try to force the question of woman's rights?

SUSAN: She simply asked her privilege as a delegate.

ELIZ: And the delegates' response?

SUSAN: Disgraceful. A mob of rowdies spat out obscenities and shouted for her to sit down, shut up, or get out.

ELIZ: Susan, I do beg of you, waste no more powder on the Temperance Society. We have bigger fish to fry. I know that Slavery is the all-

absorbing issue of today, but we need to push forward the great central question that underlies all others.

SUSAN: Mrs. Stanton, what we need to do is call a Woman's Rights convention and establish a platform as we see the need.

ELIZ: I called a woman's rights convention three years ago. A more helpless body of women I've yet to meet. You would have thought I was asking them to construct a steam engine from memory. It was the general consensus that we must elect male officers in order to justify our organization, and since that was in direct contradiction to my intent and purpose, I disassociated myself from the group.

SUSAN: But you planted the seed of revolution. Let's try again and see if it has borne fruit.

ELIZ: Women must first be educated and enlightened in order to see the degraded position assigned to them.

SUSAN: Whenever I converse with women they complain about the lack of time and money. Woman will have no true freedom until she holds her own purse strings. But how can this be if a wife is denied the right to her individual and joint earnings?

ELIZ: The demand must be made by petitions to the legislature, and I suppose the work could commence by first holding a convention and adopting some plan of united action.

SUSAN: Mrs. Stanton, we might as well be great Newfoundland dogs baying at the moon as to be petitioning for the passage of bills without the right of suffrage.

ELIZ: My dear, it's the only legal recourse we have available to us. Some days I pace up and down like a caged lioness longing for the freedom men take for granted. My husband may walk at will the whole wide world, but I'm compelled to hold my noblest aspirations in abeyance in order to be a mother, a nurse...

SUSAN: Oh, the ineffable joys of maternity! Mrs. Stanton, not another baby is my peremptory command.

ELIZ: I promise this will be my last. Woman should take to her soul a purpose and then make circumstance fit that purpose.

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NARRATOR: Susan spent the winter months of 1851 canvassing over 100 counties in New York state, and gathered 20,000 names on the petition to the state assembly. In 1852 Mrs. Stanton called a second state woman's rights convention and was elected president. In Akron, Ohio, Sojourner Truth gave her famous "Ain't I a Woman."

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SOJOURNER: Folks, I'm called Sojourner Truth. I think that twixt the Negroes of the south and the women at the north, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about? The man over there (*points to a man in the audience*) says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as any man--when I could get it... and bear the lash as well. I bore thirteen children and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman? That little man in black there, (*points to another man in audience*) he says women can't have as much rights as men cause Christ wasn't a woman. Well, children, where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman, that's where. Man had nothing to do with it. Now, if the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all by herself, these women together ought to be able to get it right side up again. Obligated to you for hearing me.

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SUSAN: Congratulations, Madam President. A great many influential women are now firmly in our camp.

ELIZ: You, too, have become something of a celebrity, my dear. Here, read this. (*hands her a newspaper*)

SUSAN: (*reading*) "Miss Susan B. Anthony considers it her mission to keep the world, or at least her part of it, in hot water. Gentlemen, take notice." Well, I hope so!

"In appearance, Miss Anthony typifies the typical old maid... tall, angular, and inclined to be vinegar visaged." Oh dear! "Susan is lean, cadaverous and intellectual, with the proportions of a file and the voice of a hurdy-gurdy." How mortifying! With reports such as these, I shall undermine everything we have accomplished.

ELIZ: Nonsense! Such unrest will unify women far more quickly than pandering to the prurient male ego. The State teacher's conference convenes in two weeks. Do you still plan to attend and stir that pool of intellectual stagnation?

SUSAN: Indeed, I must, for until every college and university opens its doors to women, she will never be admitted to the higher professions, or properly educated to her social responsibility. But as I have no natural gift for speaking, you are the one who should be on the platform, Mrs. Stanton, not I.

ELIZ: Poppycock! All in the world you need is practice, and forget everything but the thoughts you want to pound into the heads of your audience. While you're about it, abandon the terrible bondage of those long skirts. Miss Bloomer's new costume allows much greater physical freedom. *(twirls around to show off her outfit)*

SUSAN: Should I rise to speak, I want the audience's attention fixed on my words, not my hemline.

ELIZ: It's all ginger, cloves, and nutmeg. The weightier the matter of justice, the less you should worry about the tyranny of fashion.

SUSAN: What progress have you made on the address to the state assembly? The Lord knows full well that I can't get up a decent document, so I beg you, for the love of me and the saving of womanhood's reputation...

ELIZ: Some revision, a change in wording may be necessary. But I seldom have one hour to sit down and write undisturbed... four boys hallooing for my attention... baking... sewing...

ELIZ: Mrs. Stanton, you must return to your writing table and set yourself about the task. I shall stir the pudding, wash the dishes, and bounce your babies on my knee. It is of but a small moment who writes the address, but of a vast moment that it is done well.

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NARATOR: Two-thirds of those attending the NY State Teacher's Conference were women, but none would rise to speak. It was unseemly for a woman to call attention to herself. In 1853, Susan defied convention.

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SUSAN: President Davies... Mr. President...

DAVIES: What will the lady have?

SUSAN: I wish to speak to the question under debate.

DAVIES: What school district do you represent, Miss.?

SUSAN: Miss Anthony... Susan B. Anthony. I taught for ten years at a lady's academy in Canajoharie.

DAVIES: Miss Anthony, this conference is convened for New York's qualified educators.

SUSAN: I, too, am a duly qualified educator, certified by the New York board of regents. I was raised in this state and attended school here, so I have some knowledge, and certainly a personal interest, in what transpires.

DAVIES: That may be, but if we allowed all former students to air their gripes and opinions, this convention would last well into the next century.

SUSAN: It is not my intention to attack the system, but to offer suggestions on how certain inequities might be remedied.

DAVIES: To what inequities do you refer?

SUSAN: For all the gentlemen's talk about raising the social and economic status of teachers, it appears you have failed to grasp the root of the problem.

DAVIES: And you do?

SUSAN: Yes, Mr. President, I believe I do. It seems to me that you fail to comprehend the cause of the disrespect of which you complain. Look around you. Note the vast number of women engaged in the teaching profession. Don't you see that so long as society says woman has not brains enough to be a doctor, lawyer, or minister, but has plenty to be a teacher, every man of you who condescends to teach, tacitly admits he has no more brains than a woman? In this state there are eleven thousand teachers, and of these, four-fifths are women. Yet from the \$800,000 allocated by the state for teacher's salaries, the women receive only one-third. I believe this reflects the general opinion on the value of women teachers. In order to change public opinion there must be equity in pay, and women must have equal voice with men on decisions of policy and practice. If teachers are to be accorded the same elevated

status as lawyers, doctors, and ministers, the education of women, who comprise the vast majority in our profession, must be equal to that of men.

DAVIES: And how should this problem be addressed?

SUSAN: Co-education of the sexes, Mr. President.

DAVIES: (*shocked*) That is not a subject for discussion!

SUSAN: Oh, I disagree. I think it's a subject too long ignored by the educators of this state.

DAVIES: (*with righteous fervor*) What you propose is monstrous... a social evil condemned from every pulpit and by every righteous parent! Close proximity of the sexes can have but one result, and such immorality cannot, and will not, be sanctioned by men and women of pure and noble thought.

SUSAN: If children have not the innate strength to resist natural desires and passions, keeping them separated only increases their incompetence.

PHOEBE: Miss Anthony's claims are not without precedent. The colleges of Oberlin and Antioch are co-educational.

SUSAN: Yes, but the girls are restricted, whilst the boys are free to ramble over hill and dale. If they are afraid the girls will molest the boys in their solitary rambles, they could send someone to protect them. Common justice demands

that girls--however dangerous--should enjoy similar freedom. If boys and girls are permitted to attend picnics together, it certainly will not injure them to use chalk at the same blackboard. So, I ask the members of this convention to adopt a resolution stating that that it is the duty of all schools, colleges, and universities to open their doors to both sexes in order to give women the same educational advantages as are currently afforded to men.

DAVIES: Miss Anthony, your resolution is inappropriate and out of order.

PHOEBE: Mr. President, before any further discussion by this assembly, I have two resolutions I wish to see adopted.

DAVIES: Madam, you are out of order.

SUSAN: Mr. President, I move that we suspend the rules in order for Mrs. Phelps to be heard at this time.

PHOEBE: Thank you. Resolved: that this association recognize the right of female teachers to share in all the privileges and deliberations of this body. Resolved: that teachers' salaries shall be regulated according to the amount of labor performed with no distinction regarding the sex of the laborer.

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SUSAN: *(to the audience)* To the utter amazement and discomfiture of President Davies, these resolutions were passed unanimously by the 500 teachers in attendance. The world moves! Next stop on the road, the New York State Assembly.

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ELIZ: *(wearing a hat, shawl, & gloves)* In conclusion, gentlemen, we, the daughters of the Revolutionary heroes of '76, demand at your hands the redress of our grievances, a revision of your state constitution, a new code of laws. If you regard marriage as a civil contract, then let it be subject to the same laws that control all other contracts. A wife who is beholden to no law except that of her husband's, is subject to the bloated conceit of Petruchio's, who seem to say:

I will be master of what is mine own;  
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,  
My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything...

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE: Who are these people that signed your petitions, Mrs. Stanton? *(laughing)* Nothing but women and children.

ELIZ: Why shouldn't women's names be as powerful as men's? They would be if they had the power to vote.

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NARRATOR: Whenever Susan grew tired or discouraged, she renewed her energies and found comfort in Mrs. Stanton's resolute strength and commitment. There was, however, one issue that almost caused an irreparable schism in their lifelong friendship--the *Woman's Bible*.

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SUSAN: Would to God they knew the burning indignation that fills my soul. All those weeks, yea months, I trudged through pouring rain, sleet, mud... to beg and plead with indifferent and reluctant women to sign our petitions--twenty thousand in all--and you at your writing table... formulated such a powerful plea that even the most fevered opposition could do naught but what we asked... and they laughed at us! Laughed! It was all a joke to them! Every little stripling of twenty-one, half drunk, half nothing, may stagger to the ballot box and make his vote count, while the political opinion of the most intelligent and superior woman is worth no more than an idiot's. Oh! I have never been so angry and humiliated!

ELIZ: (*removing hat, shawl & gloves*) I, too, am bitterly disappointed.

SUSAN: What shall we do now?

ELIZ: Try harder next time.

SUSAN: And if we fail?

ELIZ: My dear, failure is impossible! (*beat*) Now, my condition precludes further public appearances...

SUSAN: Mrs. Stanton, you promised, no more! The country is on the brink of war, free speech is tarred and feathered, exiled and hung. In Washington it is subject to bluster, threat, insult and ridicule. In Boston the very sprigs of fashion choke it down with perfume. The anti-slavery leagues have brushed aside the suffrage movement, and you say you must attend to your domestic duties. How you can excuse yourself is more than I can understand.

ELIZ: Susan, you have become a thorn in my side. Have I not burnt the midnight oil preparing all manner of tracts, resolutions, petitions, newspaper articles...

SUSAN: Which Mr. Greeley buries between the obituaries and the classifieds...

ELIZ: I do what I can with pen and brain.

SUSAN: But refuse every invitation to speak.

ELIZ: Is there not a sufficient number-- Ernestine Rose, Lucy Stone, yourself?

SUSAN: Lucy has become a baby tender like yourself.

ELIZ: Then go pester the dickens out of Lucy instead of me. William Lloyd Garrison is mounting a campaign to protest the expansion of slavery into western states. He has asked if you would lend your organizational skills...

SUSAN: Mr. Garrison is somewhat conflicted over the role woman's rights should play in his Boston wing of the Anti-slavery League, and the ladies wear their good works like fashionable new bonnets.

ELIZ: Then turn your talents to the woman's Bible committee. We could use a dose of your good common sense.

SUSAN: Mrs. Stanton, how many times must I remind you that I don't want my name associated with any woman's Bible. You'll have to fight that battle alone. But you might put some women on your committee who have read the King James all the way through.

ELIZ: Well! If you have become weak and truckling, have lost your will to fight, lack the insight...

SUSAN: What you propose violates the right of individual judgment.

ELIZ: Rewriting the Holy Scriptures from a feminine point of view does not violate anyone's judgment except the men who twist God's Commandments in order to keep women subjugated.

SUSAN: You will alienate women who profess orthodox beliefs.

ELIZ: Women must be emancipated from the superstitions of the past before suffrage will be of any benefit.

SUSAN: And I say just the reverse. Women must be enfranchised before they can be emancipated from their superstitions.

ELIZ: If we get rid of religious bigotry, then political rights will follow.

SUSAN: No! Get political rights first and religious bigotry will melt like dew before the morning sun. Rewriting the Bible is as useless as denying Canada to a runaway slave.

ELIZ: Susan, when did you start pandering to public opinion, like the Republicans do?

SUSAN: *(adamantly, with increasing fervor)* It will be the ultimate irony if your liberal intent fosters petty espionage, a revival of the Spanish inquisition, subjecting to spiritual torture, anyone who speaks or writes against the tenets you propose. If our platform is not wide enough to hold women of all faiths, or of no faith, then I do not wish to stand upon it. We seek political and social reform, not religious. So, I repeat... I will neither promote, nor sanction, something so useless and potentially dangerous as a woman's Bible.

ELIZ: *(retorts in kind)* And I will not keep butting heads with you. *(placating)* If we are to disagree, then let us do so amicably. *(beat)* What will you do now?

SUSAN: While you produce the next generation of workers, Mrs. Stanton, I will mend my frocks and petticoats and go south with Mrs. Rose.

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NARRATOR: Susan and her family, along with other Quakers in upstate NY, assisted Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass on the Underground Railroad. But it wasn't until 1858 when Susan accompanied her friend, Ernestine Rose, on a speaking tour to Washington DC, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, that she came face-to-face with the degradation of slavery in the south for the first time.

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SUSAN: There is no promptness, no order, no anything about these southerners. What an astonishing number of servants have attended to my needs in this boarding house. Three northern girls could do the work of a dozen of these, whether slaves or free.

SARA: You want some help, Miss?

SUSAN: No, thank you. I've finished my packing. What is your name?

SARA: Sarah, Miss.

SUSAN: Are you free, Sarah?

SARA: No, Miss!

SUSAN: Do you belong to Mrs. Walters?

SARA: No, Miss, she hires me of my master for \$8 a month.

SUSAN: Do you get any portion of it?

SARA: No, Miss, only my master give me my clothes.

SUSAN: I saw you playing with a little boy last evening... your son?

SARA: No, Miss. He belongs to Miz Walters. His Ma's the cook.

SUSAN: What about his father?

SARA: His pa belongs to Mr. Johnson, on the other side of the Bay.

SUSAN: Do they ever see each other?

SARA: No, Miss.

SUSAN: How tragic. Are you married, Sarah?

SARA: I was, 'til my master sold me up north.

SUSAN: Children?

SARA: Three, Miss. Two of my husband, one of my master.

SUSAN: Where are they now?

SARA: One dead, two got sold. *(Susan turns away in horror)* Miss, I be down in the kitchen if you wants me. *(sits)*

SUSAN: I've heard stories of families brutally separated by slavery. Here in this room, I finally meet the cold reality and it chills my blood. This noon I ate my dinner without once asking myself, are these human beings who minister to my wants, slaves to be bought and sold and hired out at the will of a master? The thought never entered my mind.

SARAH: *(stands & hands Susan a letter)* Miss, this come for you.

SUSAN: Thank you, Sarah. *(opens it, scans the page & catches her breath)*, It's from my sister, Mary. *(reading)* Yesterday received the awful news of the Osawatomie raid. Mr. Mowry, who was in the battle, arrived in town saying fifty were killed, twenty survived. Father brought home *The Democrat* giving a list of killed, wounded and missing, and the name

of our Merritt is not therein. But oh! the slain are sons, brothers and husbands of others as dearly loved and sadly mourned.

SARAH: Your family, Miss?

SUSAN: Merritt is my brother.

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NARRATOR: From 1861 to 65 the woman of the north set aside *their* cause to advance anti-slavery legislation. But when the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments were drafted, they were outraged that the leaders of this nation refused to grant suffrage to one half of the population. This prompted Stanton and Anthony to form the National Woman's Suffrage Association, dedicated to the goal of universal suffrage.

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SOJOURNER TRUTH: Folks, There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women...I calculate to live, so you better get the women votin' soon.

ELIZ: Wendell Phillips says: "One idea for a generation." Horace Greeley bids the women of the nation stand aside and behold the salvation of the Negro. Senator Charles Sumner sets the order of importance: first, the Negro; second, temperance; and then woman suffrage--three Generations hence! What an insult! For thirty years women have labored to emancipate the slave. These gentlemen believe that they have nothing to fear, that woman will not avenge herself. Woman not avenge herself? Look at your asylums of the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the insane, and there behold the results of this wholesale desecration of the mothers of the race.

PHELPS: (*dons a concealing cloak with hood & speaks softly*) Miss Anthony?

SUSAN: Yes... I'm right here beside you.

PHELPS: Ssssh... you may have been followed.

SUSAN: Tell me how I can help.

PHELPS: I'm at my wits end, Miss Anthony. I know what you must think of me... a rag picker in these garments.

SUSAN: You have the manner and speech of an educated woman.

PHELPS: I'm married to a state senator, Miss Anthony. We have three lovely children.

SUSAN: You are indeed fortunate.

PHELPS: I considered myself so, until I discovered my husband was having an affair. When I confronted him with it, he became furious, out of control...

SUSAN: What happened?

PHELPS: He abused me... threw me down the stairs...

SUSAN: Dear God!

PHELPS: I was so angry... so humiliated, I threatened to expose him. The next day he had me dragged from my bed and committed to an insane asylum.

SUSAN: That's monstrous! For how long?

PHELPS: I was incarcerated for a year and a half. It was a tomb of living horrors, each day never ending. Had I the choice I would have gladly walked to the gallows. My brother finally arranged for my release and brought me to his home.

SUSAN: What of your children?

PHELPS: At first I was not allowed to see them. Then my husband permitted our 13-year-old daughter to visit me for two weeks. I pleaded with him to let her remain with me... but he refused.

SUSAN: Could your brother do nothing on your behalf?

PHELPS: He said that if I caused any more trouble he would send me back to the asylum.

SUSAN: *(shaking her head in disbelief)* What did you do?

PHELPS: The only course of action left to me. I took my child and fled.

SUSAN: Where did you go?

PHELPS: The Society of Friends sheltered us until my husband's agents discovered our whereabouts. We have been hiding in alleyways, abandoned shacks, begging for food... and now, there is a warrant for my arrest!

SUSAN: Will you trust me with your name, Mrs...?

PHELPS: My given name is Phoebe.

SUSAN: Well then, Phoebe, we must find refuge for you and your daughter, someplace your husband would never think to search. Come with me. *(they sit)*

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NARRATOR: Internal factions over the right of suffrage for black women in the south caused a split in the NWSA; thus, a rival organization, the American Woman's Suffrage Association was formed by Lucy Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell. Though rivals, both groups fought equally hard to repeal laws that denied women the right to their own earnings, property, and guardianship of their children. They urged the thousands of girls being exploited in factories to form Working Women's unions, and continued to campaign for coeducation of the sexes at universities, colleges, and trade schools. Yet a large majority of women still regarded the ballot box as an act of oppression. Sad to say, Mrs. Phelps' daughter was found, returned to her father, and the mother succumbed to ill health without ever seeing her children again.

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DAR WOMAN: Daughters of the American Revolution, when we heard Miss Anthony speak a fortnight ago, I knew that I could not rest until I responded to such outspoken heresy. Women vote? Never! Have we not made mistakes enough in the political arena without adding this most pitiful confusion, this arrant folly? If Man is willing to do all the dirty work of political arrangement, then I say, let him do it, his share and mine.

SUSAN: Mrs. Stanton, I don't believe I'll renew my membership in the DAR.

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*[The lobby of the State Capitol, Albany NY]*

ELIZ: Mr. Greeley, how delightful to see you again.

GREELEY: My pleasure, Mrs. Stanton. Mounting another attack on the body politic?

ELIZ: Precisely. Will the Tribune survive without the captain on deck? I'm told that not a single word gets printed without your expressed approval.

GREELEY: True, true. But I did not want to miss Miss Anthony's speech to the state assembly. A Quaker who preaches revolution? I was taught that Christ was a peacemaker, not an agitator.

SUSAN: *(with fire)* "I came into the world not to bring peace, but a sword. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites that devour widow's houses!" Read the New Testament, Mr. Greeley, and then say Christ was not an agitator.

GREELEY: You know, of course, that the ballot and the bullet go together. If you vote, are you ready to fight?

SUSAN: Yes, Mr. Greeley, just as you do--at the point of a goose-quill pen. *(ladies laugh)*

GREELEY: *(with controlled anger)* Miss Anthony, not one woman in a thousand would exercise the right of suffrage even if it were granted to her. No, I would not degrade woman by giving her the right of suffrage. It would unalterably remove her from that pedestal where she stands today.

ELIZ: If you may vote at twenty-one, then so should I. Your paper could do a great deal to keep this in the public mind.

GREELEY: *The Tribune* merely *reflects* popular opinion. The majority of women, the best women I know, do not want to vote.

ELIZ: Mr. Greeley, I have with me a petition signed by over 300 of the best women you know... including your wife and daughter. *(shows him the petition)*

GREELEY: *(boiling with anger)* You ladies are the most maneuvering politicians in the state of New York. Could you not have inscribed my wife's maiden name to save me embarrassment?

SUSAN: No, Mr. Greeley. We wanted the world to know that it was the wife of Horace Greeley, publisher of *The New York Tribune*.

GREELEY: Now that I know the animus of your tactics, I shall give positive instructions that no word of praise shall ever again be awarded you in my paper. Good day. *(sits)*

ELIZ: Oh, dear! I suppose it was a mistake to get crosswise with the press. We need the great dailies to get our message across.

SUSAN: Maybe it's time we started raising strawberries.

ELIZ: Whatever are you talking about?

SUSAN: Mr. Greeley once wrote that women ought not to expect the same pay as men. He advised them to go to New Jersey, buy a parcel of ground, and raise strawberries. Then, when they came to New York with their produce, no one would think of offering them half price. I say that it is high time we were raising strawberries on our own ground.

ELIZ: What an absolutely splendid idea. We shall attack Mr. Greeley with a newspaper of our own, written entirely by women, and expressly for women. I shall draw up a list of supporters whom we might approach for the necessary capital--shares of stock, as it were--and commence to set the wheels in motion.

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NARRATOR: On November 5, 1872, Susan Anthony, her 3 sisters, and 10 other women residing in the 8<sup>th</sup> Ward of Rochester, registered and voted for a representative to Congress and the President of the United States. Subsequently, they were arrested for violating the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the NY state constitution that prohibited women from voting. But only Miss Anthony was indicted and brought to trial. Her attorney claimed that if she had not openly stated she voted a straight Republican ticket, the Registrar for the Democrats might not have brought charges. True or not, the trial was held in Canandaigua County in the spring of 1873 before a jury of 12 men. Miss Anthony, because she was a woman, was declared incompetent to testify in her own defense, so her attorneys took the stand on her behalf. When both sides had completed their arguments, the presiding judge, Chief Justice Ward Hunt, read the verdict, that with remarkable forethought, he had penned before the trial began.

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HUNT: Miss Anthony's attempt to corrupt the political system which has been upheld and maintained by the wise men of this nation ever since it was established by the founding fathers, is of the gravest nature, and not something to be applauded or encouraged by those who feel she is a step

away from sainthood. The defendant was indicted for, and has admitted to, violating the 19th section of the Act of Congress of May 31, 1870, which states that any person who knowingly votes without having the lawful right to vote shall be deemed guilty of a crime. The question then, is one of law, and I have decided, as a question of law, that under the fourteenth amendment, Miss Anthony was not protected in a right to vote. I therefore direct the jury to find a verdict of guilty.

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NARRATOR: Henry Seldon, attorney for the defense, objected that no such ruling could be made in a criminal case, but Justice Hunt declined a motion to poll the jury, and the 12 men were dismissed. He then told the defendant to stand and asked if she had anything to say before sentence was pronounced.

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*(Susan was age 53 at the time of the trial, but the following may be played by either the younger or elder Anthony.)*

SUSAN: Yes, your honor, I have many things to say; for in your ordered verdict of guilty you have trampled under foot every vital principle of our government. My natural rights, my civil rights, my political rights, and my judicial rights are all alike ignored. Robbed of the fundamental privilege of citizenship, I am degraded from the status of a citizen to that of a subject.

HUNT: The court will not listen to a rehearsal of argument that the prisoner's counsel has already presented.

SUSAN: May it please your honor, I am not arguing the question, but simply stating the reasons why sentence cannot be pronounced against me. Your denial of my citizen's right to vote is the denial of my right of consent as one of the governed, the denial of my right of representation as one of the taxed, and the denial of my right to a trial by a jury of my peers; therefore, the denial of my sacred right to life, liberty, and...

HUNT: The prisoner must sit down. The court cannot allow...

SUSAN: May it please the court to remember that since the day of my arrest last November, this is the first time that either myself, or any person of my disenfranchised class, has been allowed a word of defense before judge or jury...

HUNT: The prisoner has been tried according to the established forms of law.

SUSAN: Yes, your honor, but by forms of law all made by men, interpreted by men, administered by men, and in favor of men. Hence, your honor's ordered verdict of guilty simply because that citizen was a woman and not a man.

HUNT: *(angrily)* Miss Anthony...

SUSAN: Yesterday, man-made law declared it a crime punishable with a \$1,000 fine and six month's imprisonment to give a cup of cold water, a crust of bread, or a night's shelter to a panting fugitive tracking his way to Canada. Yet every man or woman in whose veins coursed a drop of human sympathy violated that wicked law and was justified in so doing. As the slaves got their freedom, so now women must get theirs.

HUNT: *(strikes the gavel)* The Court orders the prisoner to shut up and sit down. It will not allow another word. *(Susan sits)* The prisoner will stand up. *(Susan stands)* The sentence of this Court is that you pay a fine of \$100 and the costs of prosecution.

SUSAN: May it please your honor, I shall never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty. The Constitution of these United States declares that all citizens are equal under its protecting aegis. But as I failed to get justice--failed, even, to get a trial by a jury of my peers--I ask not leniency at your hands, but rather the full rigors of your contemptible laws. All the stock in trade I possess is a ten thousand dollar debt incurred while publishing my newspaper, the sole object of which was to educate women to do precisely as I have done-- rebel against your man-made, unjust, unconstitutional laws that tax, fine, imprison, and even hang women, while denying them any representation in the Government that made those laws. This government is not a democracy. It is the most hateful oligarchy of sex ever established on the face of the globe. I shall work with might and main to pay back every dollar of my honest debt, but not one penny shall go to your unjust claim. And I shall earnestly and persistently continue to urge all women to follow the old revolutionary maxim: resistance to tyranny is obedience to God.

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NARRATOR: And that is precisely what Susan did, from coast to coast and across the seas, in every city and hamlet, attending hundreds of conventions and making thousands of speeches, until her death in 1906-14 years before the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution was ratified granting women the right to vote.

In 1920 Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National-American Woman's Suffrage Association, addressed the final meeting of the organization.

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CATT: Ladies and gentlemen, ours has been a movement with a soul. Women came, served, and passed on, but others came to take their place, an army of them who consecrated their lives to the belief that failure was impossible. We owe a debt of gratitude to our foremothers for the rights we now take for granted--to vote, to enter into contracts, to apply to the college of our choice, to choose a profession, to sue for divorce and retain custody of our children. Be glad, let your joy be unconfined, for the Cause has been won. Let your voice ring out and into the heart of every woman who still yearns for the freedoms we now enjoy. But let us not forget that wage equity is still a contention in many forums, women and minorities do not have equal representation in Congress, and in some parts of the world women still remain the legal chattel of their fathers and husbands.

So, dear ladies of this new century, gird yourself with armor and go forth into the battle. It is your turn now. Let us all rise and sing together the first and last stanzas of, "My Country, Tis of Thee."

My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing:  
Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrim's pride,  
From every mountain side,  
Let freedom ring.

Our fathers' God to Thee  
Author of liberty,  
To Thee we sing:  
Long may our land be bright,  
With freedom's holy light,  
Protect us with Thy might,  
Great God our King.