

A HOUSE DIVIDED

AN INTIMATE MUSICAL OF THE  
LINCOLN PRESIDENCY

BOOK, MUSIC AND LYRICS BY  
MICHAEL J. SALMANSON  
MAUREEN KANE BERG  
THOMAS C. BERG

©2016

THE CAST

- Abraham Lincoln      *(baritone)* mid-50s. A native Kentuckian, failed one-term Congressman, and unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate, his gifted oratory propels him onto the national stage. At the Republican convention of 1860, he outmaneuvers far more well-known and powerful rivals to capture the nomination, and is elected President with only 40% of the popular vote.
- Mary Lincoln      *(mezzo soprano)* mid 50's. A native southerner from a slaveholding family, her brothers fought for the South; and therefore she was treated largely as an outcast by Washington's elite. Acutely aware that she married beneath her station, she is an exceptionally fragile and lonely individual, and fiercely loyal to her husband. Having never fully recovered from the death of her second son, Eddie, the subsequent death of Willie leaves her emotionally devastated.
- Elizabeth Keckley      *(soprano)* A freed black woman, she has the reputation as the finest seamstress in Washington, and is quickly hired by Mary Lincoln. Separated from her husband when he was sold, and from her son, who is serving in the Union army, she and Mrs. Lincoln bond over their family tragedies, and she quickly becomes Mary Lincoln's closest confidante and friend. Keckley as Character is referred to throughout at "KECKLEY."
- Keckley/Narrator      As an elderly woman, KECKLEY/NARRATOR reflects back on the events of the Lincoln White House in her unique role as participant, confidante and observer.
- Will. Henry Seward      *(tenor)* Secretary of State; former Governor and Senator of New York, and Lincoln's primary rival for 1860 Republican nomination. Originally a bitter foe, and somewhat of an intellectual and social snob, he believes Lincoln to be far less equipped to be President than he. Nevertheless, he joins the cabinet, and becomes Lincoln's closest confidant and friend, and greatest admirer.

Salmon Chase (*baritone*) Secretary of the Treasury, former Governor and Senator of Ohio and 1860 and 1864 rival for Republican nomination. Favorite of the antislavery Republicans, his ambition knows no limit. Lincoln finally rids him from the Cabinet by appointing him Chief Justice; one of his first tasks in the role is to administer the oath of office to Lincoln at the second inaugural.

Willie Lincoln (*treble*) Lincoln's third son, 10 years old at the time of Lincoln's inauguration, and Tad's best friend, he tragically dies in the White House, leaving his mother and younger brother devastated.

Tad Lincoln (*treble*) Lincoln's youngest son, 8 years old at the time of Lincoln's inauguration. Shy with a speech impediment, he is a sad and lonely child after his playmate Willie's death.

The following named parts may also participate in the Chorus. The Chorus needs at least one singer on each part (S, A, T, B), including the following.:

Robert Lincoln (*tenor*) Lincoln's oldest son, he is aloof and somewhat estranged from his parents. A Harvard undergraduate at the war's opening, he desperately wants to serve in his father's army, but is barred from doing so by his father. (Actor could also participate in certain Chorus pieces.)

Kate Chase (*soprano*) Salmon Chase's oldest daughter, she is an accomplished beauty and the toast of Washington society. As her father is a three-time widower, she serves as his hostess, and presides over a salon where Chase's allies gather to disparage Lincoln and promote Chase for President in 1864.

John Wilkes Booth (*baritone*) An accomplished actor and southern sympathizer.

George Keckley (*tenor*) Elizabeth Keckley's son whose freedom she had also purchased. Keckley sent him to college, but he left to join the war effort and ultimately died in battle.

Mrs. McLean (*soprano or alto*) Member of Washington society who provides Elizabeth Keckley with an introduction to Mary Lincoln.

Three Servants (*soprano, alto, tenor*) Two maids and one butler who exclude Mary Lincoln from the homes of Washington society.

Various assorted servants, soldiers, doctor, etc.



**A HOUSE DIVIDED**

ACT I SCENE I February 11, 1861 (Washington, D.C.)

CHORUS representing Washington society; including KATE CHASE, SALMON CHASE and WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD.

["WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD?"]

WOMAN

Have you ever met them?

MAN

*[dismissively]*

Of course not. I haven't traveled to the prairie.

ALTO

Well, whatever *you* think -- I'm excited to see them, after all I've heard!

CHORUS

*[sings]*

WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD?

ALTO

THEY'RE COMING SOON:  
FRIDAY NOON

CHORUS

THAT'S WHAT I HEARD!  
SOON THE KEYS TO THE WHITE HOUSE  
WILL BE TRANSFERRED;  
KINDLY TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE HEARD!

TENOR

Here now! Listen to this!  
I'VE BEEN TOLD HE STILL LIVES IN A CABIN

WOMEN

HAVE YOU HEARD? HAVE YOU HEARD?

TENOR

SPLITS A LOG WITH A SINGLE BLOW!

WOMEN

HAVE YOU HEARD THE THING I HEARD?

BASS

THINK HOW ABE THE CHAMPION WRESTLER

CHORUS

THREW A MAN TWICE HIS WEIGHT,  
THEN TOOK DOUGLAS IN DEBATE,  
AND NOW HE COMES TO FACE  
THE REBEL FOE!

*[SEWARD and CHASE enter together. Several members of the crowd rush to them].*

CHORUS MEMBER

Senator Seward! Senator Chase!!

ANOTHER CHORUS MEMBER

You've both met the man; what is he *truly* like?

CHASE

*[proudly]*

Well. . . .

SEWARD

*[cutting him off]*

As you may know, he is a remarkable speaker. But you will need to prepare yourself for his. . . appearance.

*[mischievously]*

HE IS. . . . LEAN AND LANK; PRETTY AS A SCARECROW  
SHOCK OF HAIR IN DISARRAY.

BARITONE

LOOK OUT FOR A WALKING BEANPOLE:  
THAT'S HOW WE'LL KNOW HIM,  
SO THEY SAY!

CHORUS

GIANT FEET AND GIANT HANDS  
BABOON ARMS THAT HANG DOWN LOW;

SOPRANO

MY SECOND COUSIN KNEW A MAN  
WHO SAW HIM ONCE, AND TOLD ME SO!

*[The crowd laughs.]*

ALTO

Listen, everyone! You won't believe this!

CHORUS

WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD?

ALTO

COME OVER HERE;  
GIVE AN EAR

CHORUS

TO WHAT I HEARD!  
THOUGH I NEVER WOULD UTTER AN UNKIND WORD  
HAVE YOU HEARD THE THING I HEARD?

*[The crowd laughs again.]*

CHASE

*[interrupting]*

Friends, my daughter, Kate Chase!

*[KATE CHASE makes a grand entrance]*

CHORUS

KATE CHASE, OUR SHINING STAR  
WITH LOVELINESS AND WIT ENDOWED;  
YOUR FATHER'S LEADING COUNSELOR:  
YOUR MOTHER WOULD HAVE BEEN SO PROUD!

MALE

Tell us Miss Chase. What have you heard?

*[The crowd watches KATE CHASE intently.]*

KATE CHASE

*[with mock indifference]*

Very little, my dear. Just this:

*[insulting, with a smirk]*

HIS DEAR WIFE WAS BRED IN KENTUCKY

PLUMP AND PLAIN AS E'ER YOU SAW;

*[The crowd is awestruck by her meanness]*

ALTO

MY FRIEND MET HER SHOPPING ON BROADWAY;  
CUD OF TOBACCO IN HER JAW!

CHORUS

SHE GREW UP WITH FAM'LY SLAVES  
TO SATISFY HER EV'RY WHIM;  
SO WHEN SHE BECAME HIS WIFE,  
I HEAR SHE MADE A SLAVE OF HIM!

CHORUS

WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD?

BASS

CAN HE COPE?

SOPRANO

LET US HOPE!

CHORUS

FOR WE HAVE HEARD  
THAT THE THREAT TO THE UNION  
WON'T BE DEFERRED;  
SO PRAY TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE HEARD!

HAVE YOU HEARD?

KECKLEY/NARRATOR

*[enters and addresses audience]*

In our day, Washington loved to gossip. That was before President and Mrs. Lincoln had even arrived. The gossip got more vicious over the next four years – even in front of me, as many did not realize how well I came to know Mrs. Lincoln. My name is Elizabeth Keckley – I was a dressmaker for the finest ladies in the capital. For example....

KECKLEY/NARRATOR AND KECKLEY *[together]*

Mrs. McLean!

*[KECKLEY enters, carrying a small bundle, and approaches a member of the ensemble.]*

KECKLEY

I have your frock ready.

*[hands CHORUS MEMBER the package, who opens it and holds up dress]*

MRS. McLEAN

Mrs. Keckley – this is lovely. And I have another order for you – my invitation has arrived, and I need a gown for the evening of the Inauguration.

KECKLEY

That is impossible! I have more promised already than I can manage!

MRS. McLEAN

*[slyly]*

I have often heard you say that you would like to sew for the ladies of the White House.

KECKLEY/NARRATOR

*[aside; with a sly smile]*

I am afraid I had.

MRS. McLEAN

*[smirks]*

If my gown catches Mrs. Lincoln's eye, I shall be sure to recommend you to her. *Let me advise you.* Mrs. Lincoln likes to show as much bosom as is more flattering at *my* age. If you wish to catch her eye with my gown, remember that in the design.

*[MRS. McLEAN and KECKLEY exit.]*

KECKLEY/NARRATOR

*[to audience]*

I did become Mrs. Lincoln's seamstress, but more than once she called me her dearest friend. Perhaps you find that unexpected – but just think from whom she had to choose.

*[indicates where the CHORUS had exited; then pulls man's dress glove from her pocket]*

The world held many opinions about both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. But I was there, inside the White House, where I came to know them as people. This glove may not look like much, but it's my most prized possession.. The wear that you see is from the marks of the thousands of hands that grasped Mr. Lincoln's on the night he was sworn in as President the second time. By then, the war was nearly won, slavery had been nearly abolished, and people called Mr. Lincoln a hero. But before he could be known for bringing our nation's divided house together, it had to fall apart. And those of us behind the scenes also knew Mr. Lincoln's struggle to unify those in his other houses: a government of jealous rivals, and a family whose relations would be strained by personal loss. Mr. Lincoln was a great man, but neither he nor Mrs. Lincoln was perfect. One thing I can tell you though, they loved their children.

ACT I SCENE II MONTAGE February 11, 1861 (Springfield, Illinois)  
Bedroom, LINCOLN tagging and chasing the boys, trying to corral them.

MARY

*[enters; hugs and kisses WILLIE and TAD]*

Now boys, enough of this. Tomorrow, we leave for Washington. Father, I expect you to get these boys settled down. I am quite certain that they will not tolerate your rambunctious behavior in the White House.

*[MARY exits]*

TAD

Father?

LINCOLN

Yes, Tad?

TAD

I worry about Eddie.

LINCOLN

What *about* your brother?

TAD

What if his soul gets lost when we're gone? What if he doesn't know where we've gone?

WILLIE

Don't be so half-witted, Tad. Souls can't be lost. . . can they father?

LINCOLN

Well, there are certainly lost souls. But they are among the living. Now, enough talk of lost souls. . . Eddie's will be fine. And I'm sure his soul will look after us from here. After all, Lincoln men aren't home in Washington. We're from Illinois.

TAD

And Kentucky before that, right?

LINCOLN

And Kentucky before that.

WILLIE

*[jumping in excitedly]* Which makes us. . .

TAD

Half Horse, 'cause we're fast!

WILLIE

and half Alligator, 'cause we're tough!

*[As TAD and WILLIE get into bed, LINCOLN pulls out a harmonica, and starts playing softly and slowly, as a sort of lullaby].*

[“THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY”]

WILLIE [*gently*]

YE GENTLEMEN AND LADIES FAIR WHO GRACE THIS FAMOUS CITY

*[As TAD starts to sing, LINCOLN accompanies him on the harmonica. The pace picks up slightly.]*

TAD

JUST LISTEN, IF YOU’VE TIME TO SPARE, WHILE I REHEARSE THIS DITTY

WILLIE

AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY CONCEIVE YOURSELVES QUITE LUCKY

TAD

FOR ’TIS NOT OFTEN THAT YOU SEE A HUNTER FROM KENTUCKY.

*[Piano joins in from pit. Pace picks up even more.]*

WILLIE and TAD

OH KENTUCKY, THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY!

OH KENTUCKY, THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY!

TAD

Father, Sing With us!

WILLIE

Yeah!

LINCOLN

Now boys, you heard your mother. It’s time to settle down. . . .

TAD

Oh, come on!

WILLIE

WE ARE A HARDY FREE-BORN RACE, EACH MAN TO FEAR A STRANGER.

TAD

WHAT E’ER THE GAME, WE JOIN THE CHASE, DESPISING TOIL AND DANGER.

Come, on Father - this is your part!

WILLIE

Just one verse!

LINCOLN

Well. . . if you promise to go to sleep.

WILLIE AND TAD

We promise!

LINCOLN

*[As LINCOLN sings his lines, he starts to march around the room. Quickly, both boys get out of bed and follow him, marching in military style.]*

AND IF A DARING FOE ANNOYS, WHAT E'ER HIS STRENGTH AND FORCES  
WE'LL SHOW HIM THAT KENTUCKY BOYS ARE ALLIGATOR HORSES!

*[Here, the piece picks up to full speed.]*

LINCOLN, TAD, WILLIE

O KENTUCKY, THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY  
O KENTUCKY, THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY!

*[By the line "Now Jackson he was wide awake . . ." all three are full on marching. We see MARY come to the door, looking very indignant, but TAD, WILLIE, and LINCOLN don't see her yet and keep getting louder and more raucous.]*

NOW JACKSON HE WAS WIDE AWAKE  
AND WASN'T SCARED OF TRIFLES,  
FOR WELL HE KNEW WHAT AIM TO TAKE  
WITH OUR KENTUCKY RIFLES.  
AND NOW, IF DANGER E'ER ANNOYS  
REMEMBER WHAT OUR TRADE IS;  
JUST SEND FOR US KENTUCKY BOYS,  
AND WE'LL PROTECT YOUR LADIES!

*[As they sing: " Just send for us Kentucky boys . . ." all three come face to face with MARY and they sing "we'll protect your*

*ladies" to her, looking taken aback. She glares at them, hands on hips, and they stop in their tracks.]*

MARY

Enough of this racket! There'll be no protecting ladies with rifles tonight! Father - I asked you to get these boys settled down!

LINCOLN

Boys, your mother is right, as always. Mother, you needn't worry. I'll get these boys to bed.

*[MARY exits and LINCOLN tucks the boys into their bed, singing to them with quiet mischief]*

LINCOLN

OH KENTUCKY, THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY  
OH KENTUCKY, THE HUNTERS OF KENTUCKY!

*[As LINCOLN approaches the door, Mary reappears, hearing the end of the song. LINCOLN stops, slightly embarrassed. MARY eyes LINCOLN, annoyed, then smiles, shakes her head, and touches his face tenderly. MARY turns and exits; LINCOLN follows.]*

*FADEOUT/BLACKOUT*

ACT I SCENE III March 4, 1861 (Washington, D.C.)

FIRST INAUGURAL (AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME)"]

A CROWD gathers in Washington to witness the inauguration of the President. LINCOLN, SEWARD, CHASE AND MARY; CHORUS as citizen audience. As the prelude continues, the people anxiously arrange themselves in lines and groups. The LINCOLNS enter, flanked by the CHIEF JUSTICE and BAILIFF. The crowd whispers.

SEWARD [*begrudgingly*]

Mr.. President.

LINCOLN [*magnanimously*]

Secretary Seward, Secretary Chase..

AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME  
AND NOW THE DIE IS CAST  
THE NATION WAITS FOR WORDS OF PEACE  
I FEAR THE TIME FOR WORDS HAS PASSED.

Fellow Citizens -- It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our national constitution. I now enter upon the same task under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the Federal union. . . heretofore only menaced is now forcibly attempted.

LINCOLN

SEWARD

AND NOW HIS TIME HAS COME

CHASE

AND NOW HE TAKES COMMAND

SEWARD AND CHASE

HE MEETS THIS CHALLENGE  
UNPREPARED  
SO FROM HIS SIDE I'LL GUIDE HIS  
HAND.

I hold that, in contemplation of the Constitution, the Union of these states is perpetual. Physically speaking, we cannot separate.

SEWARD

A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT  
STAND

CHASE

WE CAN'T REMAIN BOTH SLAVE  
AND FREE

SEWARD AND CHASE

YOU SAID THOSE WORDS BEFORE  
AND THOUGH IT MUST BRING  
WAR  
STAND BY THAT TRUTH IF  
YOU WOULD STAND WITH ME.

A husband and wife may be divorced and get out of the presence, and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this.

MARY

AND NOW OUR TIME HAS COME,  
A FAVORED LOT AT LAST  
MY HUSBAND'S TASK IS MINE TO  
SHARE  
OUR DARK AND LONELY DAYS  
ARE PAST.

SEWARD AND CHASE

A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT  
STAND

They cannot but remain face to face;  
and intercourse either amicable or hostile  
must continue between them.

MARY, SEWARD AND CHASE

BOUND UP WITH THIS MAN,  
I'LL AID HIM AS I CAN

We are not enemies, but friends.  
We must not be enemies.

SEWARD AND CHASE

YOU WERE WISE TO BRING ME IN,  
FRIEND  
YOU SIT WHERE I BELONG  
YOUR HAND MAY WAVER ON THE  
REINS  
SO MINE WILL BE THERE FIRM  
AND STRONG!

The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

BAILIFF

The Chief Justice will now administer the oath.

*[LINCOLN step downstage, raises his right hand and faces the Chief Justice, placing his left hand on a bible held by MARY]*

CHORUS

ABIDE WITH ME,  
FAST FALLS THE EVENTIDE  
THE DARKNESS DEEPENS,  
LORD WITH ME ABIDE:  
WHEN OTHER HELPERS FAIL  
AND COMFORTS FLEE  
HELP OF THE HELPLESS,  
OH, ABIDE WITH ME.

I, Abraham Lincoln, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States....

...and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

MARY, SEWARD AND CHASE  
AND NOW OUR TIME HAS COME

AND NOW HE'S SWORN THE OATH  
TOGETHER WE'LL PRESERVE THIS HOUSE  
TO BUTTRESS IT WILL TAKE US BOTH

LINCOLN AND MARY

A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT STAND

A HOUSE UNITED WE MUST BE

SEWARD AND CHASE

NOW OUR TIME HAS COME

NOW OUR TERM'S BEGUN

ALL

OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT DONE  
OUR VICTORY NOT WON

CHORUS

FAST FALLS THE EVENTIDE  
*[The Crowd begins to disperse]*

SOLI

AND NOW OUR TIME HAS COME  
AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME  
NOW THE DIE IS CAST  
AND NOW OUR TIME HAS COME  
NOW HE TAKES COMMAND.

*[Song ends. As LINCOLN descends the podium, shaking hands,  
and while others mill around, CHASE stops him.]*

CHASE

Mr. President. I had hoped you would present a clear plan to abolish slavery.

LINCOLN

Mr. Chase, as I've said before, I have no love for slavery, but the Constitution gives me no power to abolish it. I hope I can limit it. Good day.

*[LINCOLN exits; KATE CHASE approaches CHASE from the crowd.]*

KATE

Father! What did you think?

CHASE

Kate! Pretty enough speech, I suppose, but no steel in it. I know he is aware of the abomination that is slavery, but he lacks the courage to do away with it!

KATE *[disdainfully]*

What was "Honest Abe" doing while *you* defended the fugitive slave Matilda in the Supreme Court?

CHASE

Hawking elixirs in the general store, spinning tall tales with the yokels.

*[chuckling, then, shaking his head with a frown]*

He lacks the force of character this moment requires.

KATE

The country will see that soon enough. Come now, I have just invited six Senators' wives to join us before tonight's festivities. They are anxious to meet the *next* President. Let us not keep them waiting.

*[KATE and CHASE laugh and exit together. KECKLEY/  
NARRATOR speaks as KECKLEY enters hurriedly with another  
package.]*

KECKLEY/NARRATOR

*[to the audience]*

I had arrived in Washington a free woman in early 1860, having purchased my freedom and that of my son. Once here, I made a dress for Miss Blair to wear to a reception for the Prince of Wales. After that dress, I had all the custom I could manage.

*[Same female CHORUS MEMBER/MRS. McLEAN approaches  
KECKLEY.]*

KECKLEY

Mrs. McLean, here is your gown for tonight, just completed.

MRS. McLEAN

If it is as eye-catching as your previous work, then Mrs. Lincoln will know your name tonight.

*[MRS. McLEAN and KECKLEY exit]*

KECKLEY/NARRATOR

*[wry]*

It was, and she did. Mrs. Lincoln sent for me the day after the Inauguration. When I arrived, the President and his wife were *[searching for euphemism]*. . . conferring.

ACT I, SCENE IV –Hallway/Lincolns’ Private Rooms/MARY and LINCOLN are in their Private Residence.

*[On one side, a SERVANT admits KECKLEY, and they watch silently as MARY and LINCOLN, engrossed in their discussion, fail to see them.]*

MARY

I hardly expected to find the White House in a shabbier condition than our first boarding house! There, at least no one spat tobacco juice on the carpets!

LINCOLN

Well, you know, it has served a few families before ours.

MARY

Yes - Each President before you has left his mark --- on this chair. I will need a more substantial allowance to restore this house to a suitable elegance.

LINCOLN

In this time of unrest, we cannot appear to be attending to our personal wants.

MARY

It is the people's house and it should reflect the people's grandeur. Do you know the servants told me they have to watch for the public bringing in scissors to take a piece of the curtains with them? And clearly they've failed to catch it more than once!

LINCOLN

Then perhaps the people are getting the grandeur they deserve. I know your concern is for posterity.

MARY

My concern is that some important guest who sits on this chair will land on *his* posterity!  
*[LINCOLN chuckles. SERVANT clears throat.]*

SERVANT

Madam, this is Mrs. Keckley, who says you called for her.

MARY

*[embarrassed and suddenly cagey]*

Oh, yes. Just a moment.

SERVANT

*[approaching LINCOLN]*

Mr. President, this letter was delivered for you.

*[SERVANT exits.]*

MARY

*[flirtatious]*

What of these renovations? Have I persuaded you?

LINCOLN

*[smiling]*

Oh Mother.

*[LINCOLN looks at letter; sees where it was sent from; blanches and tears it open. Suddenly terse]*

Mother, we must stick to the agreed amount. There is no more. Now I must excuse myself. It seems that Fort Sumter in South Carolina is nearly out of provisions and could soon be forced to surrender.

*[LINCOLN, SERVANT exit. MARY turns to KECKLEY.]*

MARY

So you are the dressmaker that Mrs. McLean recommended?

KECKLEY

Yes Madam.

MARY

I did not realize you were a colored woman.

KECKLEY

Shall I go then?

MARY

They say that you are the finest seamstress in Washington. If so, that's good enough for me.

KECKLEY

*[with slight impertinence]*

Then I shall be staying.

MARY

*[surprised, but recovering]*

I shall decide that. For whom have you worked?

KECKLEY

Well, I suppose my best-known patron was Mrs. Jefferson Davis.

MARY

You worked for Mrs. Davis!? Will you switch allegiances to do my work?

KECKLEY

I believe I established my allegiances when I declined Mrs. Davis's invitation to accompany her to the South.

*[MARY laughs, sits, and motions for KECKLEY to sit as well]*

Will you have much work for me to do?

MARY

Well, if your price is reasonable, there will be plenty for you to do. But you must use only the best fabrics. The people scrutinize every article that I wear.

KECKLEY

My customary charge is ten dollars, plus reimbursement for the cost of the fabric.

MARY

*[stunned]*

Ten Dollars! Why, Mrs. Keckley, that is a handsome price indeed!

KECKLEY

If it is too handsome, perhaps you can find another seamstress to make *you* less so.  
*[starting to rise.]*

MARY

No, wait.

*[KECKLEY sits back down]*

It shall be arranged. Next week I start my calls on Washington's ladies, and I need a suitable ensemble. In this case, I have purchased the fabric already.

*[Mary goes and picks up fabric and hands it to KECKLEY.]*

KECKLEY

Thank you madam.

*[KECKLEY nods and exits.]*

KECKLEY/NARRATOR

*[enters]*

From that moment forward I spent many of my days at the White House. You might be surprised how much you can see ... and hear ... when you are invisible. And before too long, Mrs. Lincoln began to confide in me those things that I did not witness myself.

ACT I, SCENE V –Hallway/Lincolns' Bedroom/Cabinet Room

SEWARD and CHASE on their way to Cabinet Room; LINCOLN and MARY in Private rooms.

SEWARD

Mr. Chase! I'm glad I found you before the Cabinet Meeting! I wanted to discuss a memorandum I have sent the President.

CHASE

Oh?

SEWARD

We all realize that each member of the Cabinet has more experience in the federal government than does Mr. Lincoln.

CHASE

Even the President would have to agree.

SEWARD

Precisely. We must have the authority to act on our policies. My memorandum suggests that we all agree to be bound by the decisions of each Cabinet member over his area of policy.

CHASE

It sounds very sensible. Do you think the President will acquiesce?