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READING 1. (2 MEN, 1 WOMAN) BUNYAN, MR. & MRS. COBB

BUNYAN: *(finishes hammering)* Done.

MRS. COBB: Fine work, Master Bunyan.

BUNYAN: You can be back to making your stew, Mrs. Cobb. *(He hands the repaired stewpot to her and begins to pack up his tools and anvil).*

MRS. COBB: Quite the stew is being made about you, John Bunyan.

MR. COBB: It's now forbidden to preach unless you are ordained by the Church of England.

BUNYAN: By what law?

MR. COBB: Charles the Second has reinstated the Act of Uniformity.

BUNYAN: Cromwell and Parliament buried that law years ago!

MR COBB: Ah, now it is Cromwell and Parliament who are buried and the new King Charles we contend with. Stick to your calling *(with some degree of condescension he gives Bunyan a coin for his work)*...that of a tinker.

BUNYAN: Didn't we fight a war to gain our freedoms?...

MR. COBB: ...Brother Bunyan, are we not on the same road as you? Is your position any better than ours?

BUNYAN: We meet at Samsell tonight. Join us!

MRS. COBB: We don't fancy the idea of jail! We know when to show our piety.

MR. COBB: It does not serve us well to do so at this time.

READING 2. (2 MEN) BUNYAN, MR. COBB

COBB: *(once in BUNYAN'S CELL)* Neighbor Bunyan, how do you do?

BUNYAN: *(turning on his bench; subdued, and pensive)* I'm determined to remain faithful and hopeful, bless God, and how are you Cobb?

COBB: I've come to plead with you to submit to the laws of the land, or it will go worse for you, perhaps meaning your being deported from the country, or even still, the Gallows.

BUNYAN: The Gallows? Am I to stretch by the neck for praying in a home? I have broken no law. To preach the gospel is a good work. Does this amount to treason?

COBB: The king remembers all too well the forces that demanded his father's head. The latest insurrection in London... under what glorious pretenses they went, and yet they intended nothing short of taking up arms against the king.

BUNYAN: I abhor their practice of violence. Yet it does not follow that all who protest will do the same. Besides, the downfall of England requires no revolution. The country is rotting from within. It suffers a spiritual plague more severe than the one killing thousands of its people and now it forbids the cure!

COBB: There you go again... that passion. It rouses people to..to *(fishing for the word)* action. Do you see how dangerous that is?

BUNYAN: The king need not fear. I am not another Cromwell.

COBB: John, I believe I can have you released. Consider this matter seriously and submit yourself to this offer: You may have liberty to exhort your neighbor privately, just as long as you don't speak to an assembly.

(His wife ELIZABETH and BLIND MARY (age 10) are escorted by a JAILOR into the corridor outside the cell. They can be seen through the bars. They overhear the conversation. (Option: Young LIZA a younger girl age 9 could also enter). The JAILOR departs.)

BUNYAN: Sir, if I may do good to one, why may I not do good to two? Or four or eight?

COBB: Aye, eight hundred, I am afraid!

BUNYAN: If I were let out of prison today, I would be preaching the gospel tomorrow. Unless we stand for what is right, the tyranny will continue.

COBB: What good are you behind bars, John? *(Noticing ELIZABETH and children, he speaks firmly yet trying not to be overheard by the family outside the jailbars)* What about your family?

BUNYAN: It is a price we must pay.

READING 3. (2 MEN) PILGRIM, EVANGELIST

EVANGELIST: Will you let this vision paralyze you with fear? If you are not prepared to die, it can be supposed that you have not found the path to life.

PILGRIM: What shall I do? Where shall I go?

EVANGELIST: That book in your hand, which has rightfully stirred your conscience, is the very book that tells you of the way of deliverance, the Pilgrim's highway to the Celestial City. The only city with no curse upon it.

PILGRIM: But how does one get there?

EVANGELIST: You will find within that book a map. (*He takes the book, opens it and a large OVERSIZED map unfolds*). Look!

PILGRIM: (*Taking the map from Evangelist*) Why have I not seen this before? And what is this? (*noticing the gate on the map*)

EVANGELIST: The Narrow Gate that leads to Life. Few there be that find it. Seekers of truth realize that not all roads lead to the same destination. Here is the road to life. To gain access to it, you must enter here. This one small gate.

PILGRIM: Can you direct me?

EVANGELIST: Do you see the shining light near the horizon?

PILGRIM: Where?. Oh yes! I see it now.

EVANGELIST: Follow it and you will soon find your way to the gate and soon after it, the house of the Interpreter. The gate is narrow, and must be reckoned with. Only one can go through it at a time.

PILGRIM: But what of my family?

EVANGELIST: They have not yet recognized where they are living. Nor have they sensed the greatness of their burden. You must prepare the way for them by seeking out the Celestial City yourself.

PILGRIM: But what if I never come back? What if I die?

EVANGELIST: Is that not your fate if you stay?

READING 4. (3 MEN, 1 WOMAN) FAITHFUL, PILGRIM, MR. & MRS. OPPORTUNIST

FAITHFUL: (*To Pilgrim*) If I'm not mistaken, these people are none other than the Opportunists of Love Gain!

PILGRIM: I wonder how they happened on this road? Let me ask them their names.

(*To the OPPORTUNISTS*) Pardon me, Are you not the OPPORTUNISTS?

MRS. OPPORTUNIST: Ah ha, oh my?

MR. OPPORTUNIST: (*rather embarrassed*) Excuse me?

MRS. OPPORTUNIST: (*incredulous; as if she didn't hear*) What's that?

PILGRIM: Are you not the Opportunists of Love-Gain?

MR. OPPORTUNIST: And what papers do you read?

MRS. OPPORTUNIST: Really.

MR. OPPORTUNIST: The name Opportunist is rather unfortunate and misleading, a nickname given to me by those who don't appreciate my principles of success and good fortune.

PILGRIM: I sense you have not been quite truthful with us. How is it you are on this road? Did you come through the gate?

MR. OPPORTUNIST: Why no! It's too far from where we live. For years our family has known of a short-cut that puts us on this path.

MRS. OPPORTUNIST: (*Still feeling sore*) It wasn't easy getting over that wall.

MR. OPPORTUNIST: And what does it matter? Are we not on the same path as you? Is your position any better than ours?

PILGRIM: But isn't it hypocritical to walk around in silver slippers and in sunshine parades only to court the applause of men? To be a pilgrim, you must be ready for rags as well as riches, for storms of adversity as well as sunshine.

MRS. OPPORTUNIST: (*offended*) What *are* you talking about?!

MR. OPPORTUNIST: Perhaps we would be better off traveling alone?

PILGRIM: Will it not be counted a trespass to ignore the gate and the instructions of the Lord of the Celestial City?

MRS. OPPORTUNIST: We need not worry.

MR. OPPORTUNIST: Many climb over the wall.

MRS. OPPORTUNIST: Most would be honored by our company.

MR. OPPORTUNIST: Ah look! I see some of my old schoolmates (*looking in the audience*). Just as I had hoped. Some more cheerful companions . Mr. Earthy, Mr. Moneylove and Mr. Save it all. Wait! Let us join you! (*They exit*)

READING 5. (2 MEN) BUNYAN, WILLIAM

(BUNYAN has just received a visit from his family in jail. WILLIAM, his jailor, and son of the JUSTICE who had BUNYAN imprisoned, is in love with BUNYAN'S daughter, LIZA).

BUNYAN: What do you think of them then?

WILLIAM: I think she's beautiful.

BUNYAN: She?

WILLIAM: Your daughter, Liza. I mean, the whole family. You have every reason to be proud of them. But each time I see her, I must admit..

BUNYAN: So you fancy my daughter?

WILLIAM: I don't really know what I feel.

BUNYAN: *(amused)* You hardly know her. But as her father, I assure you that she is as lovely as she looks.

WILLIAM: I don't know how you do it?

BUNYAN: Do what?

WILLIAM: It would be so easy to consent to the law and be joined to your family.

BUNYAN: And compromise all that I believe in? If I were to do so, they would not have their father back. Only an empty shell.

WILLIAM: That I could have the same courage as you.

BUNYAN: You will have your tests, William.

WILLIAM: Do saints so easily fall in love?

BUNYAN: It is good to feel love in your heart. Love is a choice. A choice to give. To affirm. To share. To sacrifice. To respond to what you value most highly.

WILLIAM: That you would value someone so highly that you would die for them?

BUNYAN: That you would gladly give all that you are and all that you have.

WILLIAM: Do I love your daughter as I think I do?

BUNYAN: William. *(Music begins)* It is not for any man to tell another what his heart should decide. In these matters we must wrestle alone before God.

READING 6. (3 MEN) PILGRIM, TIMOROUS, MISTRUST

(Pilgrim is at a crossroads. A sign is posted pointing to Hill Difficulty and The Plain of Ease. Timorous and Mistrust come running through the audience)

PILGRIM: Ahoy! What's the matter? You run the wrong way!

MISTRUST: Turn back! It's no use!

TIMOROUS: There are lions everywhere! They're coming to get us!

MISTRUST: Man-eating!

TIMOROUS: Dreadful!

MISTRUST: Most likely underfed!

TIMOROUS: Hungry!

PILGRIM: Did you see them?

MISTRUST: In the shadows.

TIMOROUS: Lurking, growling, roaring, hungry!

MISTRUST: It's a trap!

PILGRIM: But it's the road to the Celestial City.

MISTRUST: As for that City. I question whether it is worth the trip. I question whether it even exists. All we experience on our journey is trouble.

TIMOROUS: All we can expect is certain death.

MISTRUST: We were going to the Celestial City, but came to the Hill Difficulty...

TIMOROUS: ..But the further we went the more danger we met. Therefore we are going back.
(LIONS ROAR and TIMOROUS AND MISTRUST look at the sign- They run into each other in a panic. In their exit they spin PILGRIM around. They turn away from Hill Difficulty and follow the way posted to the Plain of Ease.)

READING 7. (1 MAN, 5 WOMEN) **PILGRIM, DISCRETION, PRUDENCE, PERSISTENCE, PIETY, CHARITY** *(As the daughters of Virtue, question Pilgrim they hold mirrors to his heart. Although the reflection is not seen by the audience, the image of a devoted Christ-follower, and in Charity's case, the image of Christ Himself, is held up in the mirrors).*

DISCRETION: *(with loving scrutiny)* You have come a great distance then. What caused you to set out on such a journey?

PILGRIM: A growing burden filled my heart with questions. I was convinced that life without God was meaningless, but the thought of facing Him was perilous. My own thoughts blinded me to the Promise.

DISCRETION: So how did you find it?

PILGRIM: I cried out for help.

DISCRETION: And Help came.

PILGRIM: In ways I did not expect.

DISCRETION: And did you stop by the House of the Interpreter?

PILGRIM: Yes, the Interpreter showed me many marvelous things, things I could not have known had He not shown them to me. It was He who directed me to the place of the Ultimate Sacrifice.

DISCRETION: And what did you find there?

PILGRIM: I had a vision of One dying and bleeding. There I found *(as he looks into the mirror he sees his heart)*... ah yes, peace and the Prince of it. I was given a promise of pardon and cleansing, a coat of righteousness, and a scroll from the Shining Ones to admit me to the Celestial City.

DISCRETION: Sister Piety do you have any question of this man's devotion?

PIETY: And no doubt you encountered Vanity Fair?

PILGRIM: Yes, I did. There I faced temptations of every kind.

PIETY: Do your thoughts often return to Vanity?

PILGRIM: Far too often I am afraid. But these thoughts are to my grief and humiliation rather than my joy. It was there that my good friend Faithful met his death.

DISCRETION: And received his bidding to go directly to the Celestial City where he received the crown of life! Sister Persistence?

PERSISTENCE: After so many setbacks, what gives you such a strong desire to continue on to the Celestial City?

PILGRIM: I want to be with those who are like Him, the One who gave Himself for me, and released me from my burden.

DISCRETION: Lady Charity?

CHARITY: Do you want to be like Him yourself? *(Her mirror shows him a picture resembling the King, hidden of course from the audience).*

PILGRIM: *(surprised seeing the picture)* Is that what He looks like?

CHARITY: That is how *you* will look when you see Him.

PILGRIM: This fills my heart with courage!

DISCRETION: Sister Prudence.

PRUDENCE: Have you ever doubted that you have done the right thing?

PILGRIM: At night I have been troubled by thoughts of what will happen to my family.

PRUDENCE: It is always right to take the path to Life as quickly as possible. Others, including those you leave behind depend upon it.

PILGRIM: Will they take this journey one day?

PRUDENCE: They will soon follow behind you.

DISCRETION: Just before the fires of Judgment consume your city. As for your sleepless nights of trouble and doubt. I warn you, beware of The Giant Despair. *(a change of musical theme)* He can cloud your mind with voices that will bring you into heavy discouragement and bondage.

PILGRIM: Discretion, I will take your words to heart.

READING 8. (2 MEN) APOLLYON, PILGRIM

APOLLYON: From where do you come and where are you bound?

PILGRIM: I am from the City of Destruction, and I'm going to the Celestial City.

APOLLYON: Then you are one of my subjects. For all that country of Destruction is mine.
I am the king and the god of it.

(Optional: There is the clattering of all the disembodied spirits hidden on the stage of the night.)

PILGRIM: I was indeed born under your dominion; but I have now given myself to another- the King of all princes- and I cannot go back. He has taken away my burden and given me peace.

(Apollyon, a towering figure, who is camouflaged by the mountain, is suddenly visible and shows his horrid beastly face. Smoke comes out of his body. He has claws, fish scales on his body and the feet of a bear.)

APOLLYON: I despise Him. I hate His laws, His person and His people. Do you think that I will give you up so easily? I have come for the purpose of spilling your blood.

PILGRIM: Be careful Apollyon what you do. I am in the care of One whose blood WAS spilled once and for all for me. He has released me from your miserable country to find a better life. I am in the King's Highway, the Way of Holiness, and I am in His service. Therefore take heed that you don't overstep your bounds.

APOLLYON: Prepare yourself to die! For I swear by my infernal powers that you shall go no further. Here I will take your soul!

READING 9. (2 MEN) SIR WILLIAM, BUNYAN

SIR WILLIAM: Strangely, I did hope we would have an occasion to meet again.

BUNYAN: I pray I be welcomed more favorably than I was in your court.

SIR WILLIAM: Before God I thought I was doing my duty.

BUNYAN: Duty?

SIR WILLIAM: Is not serving the King and doing my best under God's law what is required of me? And now that the King has despised me because I could no longer consent to injustice, *(slight pause as he sits down)* he has cut me off.

BUNYAN: I am sorry to hear of your lost fortune.

SIR WILLIAM: Even by doing what I believe is right, I confess I am still not free..

BUNYAN: You have served for the King's pleasure. If you had sought God's pleasure you would have found peace.

SIR WILLIAM: Like that of your 'Pilgrim'. *(He refers to a copy of Bunyan's book he has in his possession).*

BUNYAN: You've been reading my book?

SIR WILLIAM: Would I could know God does not despise me as does the King.

BUNYAN: When my sins pressed in on me I tried to repair my wrongs by doing good.. But my burden was still upon me. What I needed was pardon and cleansing. No man, no king, no church could offer that to me. It had to come from God Himself.; I would need to know that I was truly forgiven and that my burden was lifted once and for all.

SIR WILLIAM: So that is 'The Pilgrim's Progress'?

BUNYAN: Many tell me that they recognize their life journey has taken them to the same intersection.

SIR WILLIAM: The path to life..

BUNYAN: Yes. Few there be that find it.

SIR WILLIAM: I'm afraid my life has only led to Destruction. Even to the degree of putting a good man in prison. If only I could have peace.

BUNYAN: When I served the Parliamentary army, one day, just before siege of Leicester, a man came into my room, when I was not well. He insisted on taking my place in the battle. I consented and as he stood in my position he was shot in the head with a musket ball and died. I should have been killed but another died in my place. In the same way, Christ died for me. He took the death penalty my sins deserved. God so honored it that He raised Him from the dead. The words have echoed in my soul, "Thy righteousness is in Heaven, John!" It is a free gift. I realized that God was not demanding righteous performance from me, because the righteousness He required was in His Son Jesus representing me at His right hand.

SIR WILLIAM: But I disowned my son in favor of owning the doctrines of England's king.

BUNYAN: Your son loves you and waits for you.

SIR WILLIAM: My son?*(He sits down)* William?

BUNYAN: It is he that has urged me to come.

SIR WILLIAM: No, it is too late.

BUNYAN: It is NOT too late.. Years ago I lost my own daughter, Mary. She died of smallpox I loved her more than life itself. As cruel as death may appear, God has turned it to victory. My Mary though dead, lives. She cannot come to me till I go to her, but your young William can come to you if you let him. It is your pride that has kept him out of your house. Do not let that pride keep him out of your heart. I beseech you Sir William, *(Music starts)* be reconciled to a God and King who will not forsake you. Only when you are delivered from that which binds up your soul are you free to love.

SIR WILLIAM: Is there a promise for me, John?

BUNYAN: It would be my pleasure to lead you from the City of Destruction to salvation's gate. *(Pilgrim put his hand on Sir William's shoulder.)*

READING 10. (1 MAN, 1 WOMAN or MAN) **PILGRIM, HELP**

HELP: What are you doing here?

PILGRIM: What do you mean, what am I doing here?

HELP: Can't you see that you've gone off the track?

PILGRIM: I was advised of a short cut. I was told I could lose my burden in the county of Status Quo. But as I took the path to Morality, towards Dr. Law's house, all these dreadful things began to happen and my burden only became heavier..

HELP: Dr. Law promises to loosen burdens, but adds to them the weight of condemnation and judgment. His system deceives you onto the loose ground of self-righteousness, where you are sure to suffer a fall. The truth is NO ONE lives on his estate. No doubt you have been listening to the Worldly Wisemen.

PILGRIM: Yes, I'm afraid so..

HELP: They always have a song on the charts. Are you any further toward the gate since I saw you last?

PILGRIM: Well, I don't know.

HELP: What about your map?

PILGRIM: I thought it would be better to take the advice of some resident who knows their way about?

HELP: The Worldly Wisemen enjoy only the latest fads, the wisdom of this world, which is why they dwell in the county of Status Quo. They don't have a clue as to what it means to be released from the burden of a seeking heart.

PILGRIM: But they seemed to know so much!

HELP: *(music starts)* I hope you are wiser for this, Pilgrim.

PILGRIM: I am worse than a thousand fools for having listened to him! I would understand full well if I were not permitted to proceed any further.

HELP: You called for Help, did you not.

READING 11. (3 MEN) PILGRIM, PLIABLE, OBSTINATE

OBSTINATE: I am Obstinate and this is my friend, Pliable. He is so named because he is easily influenced.

PILGRIM: Is this true?

PLIABLE: If you think so.

PILGRIM: Are you double minded then?

PLIABLE: Well, yes and no.

PILGRIM: The City of Destruction is not what we have pretended it to be. One day it will be destroyed by fire. If you really knew what was in store, you would come with me.

OBSTINATE: What! And leave all of our friends and our comforts behind?

PLIABLE: (*Nods*) You're off your bloomin' rocker, if you ask me.

PILGRIM: All you leave behind cannot be compared with what lies ahead. Come with me and prove my words.

PLIABLE: I'm ready. (*as if he would take off; OBSTINATE grabs him and holds him back*)

OBSTINATE: Hold on! And what are the things you seek, that you would leave all the world to find them?

PILGRIM: You can read of them here in this book.

OBSTINATE: Away with your book! Don't be so easily swayed by what you read.

PLIABLE: What are you, easily swayed or what?

OBSTINATE: Will you come back with us or not?

PILGRIM: I will not.

PLIABLE: (*as if he is making PILGRIM the greatest offer*) We're giving you your last chance to come back and join your family and friends in the City of Destruction.

OBSTINATE: Come then Pliable, let us go back without him.

PLIABLE: (*suddenly becoming interested*) What's the book say then?

OBSTINATE: Away with the book!

PILGRIM: It speaks of what we are born for.. It speaks of a peace, that is real and lasting. I don't understand it all. But what I do understand is enough to make me never want to turn back. Come along with me. Where I go there is enough for all and to spare!

OBSTINATE: Why trade what have worked so hard for, for someplace I've never been, someplace you admit you cannot fully comprehend and, for all practical intents and purposes, can't prove to me exists?

PLIABLE: Well, neighbor Obstinate, I've decided I am going with this good man.

OBSTINATE: Another dreamer. Never mind. I am going back home. (*He begins to exit*) And Pliable..

PLIABLE: Yes?

OBSTINATE: I'll leave the light on for you. (*OBSTINATE exits*).

READING 12. (2 MEN, 1 YOUNG MAN, 2 WOMEN) **BUNYAN, WILLIAM,
ELIZABETH, LIZA**

WILLIAM: I must hurry you along now. The chief jailer is coming, Master Bunyan. It would be better if you go quickly.

BUNYAN: William, we appreciate your leniency.

Children, I would like you to meet William Beecher

ELIZABETH: Beecher, any relation to ..?

WILLIAM: Judge Beecher is my father...

ELIZABETH: And is responsible for prosecuting my husband.

WILLIAM: Yes he was, though I am ashamed of it.

BUNYAN: He is not responsible for his father's sins. Now he is our brother and has chosen to walk in the pilgrim way. He is the Hopeful in my story. William, I would like you to meet my family. This is my wife Elizabeth, my son John, Mary, born blind yet with a seeing heart, Sarah, Thomas, and my daughter, Liza.

WILLIAM: I have seen you faithfully come to the gate to tend to your father.

BUNYAN: Liza, what is that you have brought me?

LIZA: Some potato soup. *(She bends to lift the pot, William interrupts her).*

WILLIAM: Let me get it for you. *(They kneel to pick up the pot. Their hands touch and eyes meet briefly. (Weaver MUSIC Starts) Startled, and somewhat ashamed, they look away; Liza stands up and hands some bread to her father.)*

BUNYAN: Thank you. *(He hugs Liza)*

LIZA: When I feel your warm breath upon my cheek and rest in your arms, Father, I fear nothing. I want nothing.

BUNYAN: You delight my heart. Each of you delight my heart. Now you must go quickly. The chief jailer will be coming.

LIZA: Good bye father.

BUNYAN: *(To his son.)* Stand fast John

SON: God bless you, Father.

ELIZABETH: Good bye John. I pray that God hasten the day when you will again be by our fireside. But more than this, I pray, that you will stand fast, like David against the giant. Don't worry about us. We know God's care. He will not fail us.

BUNYAN: Good bye Elizabeth. See you soon. *(They exit)*

READING 13. (1 MAN) BUNYAN

BUNYAN:

Wouldst thou divert thyself from melancholy?
Wouldst thou be pleasant but be far from folly?
Wouldst thou read riddles and their explanation?
Or else be drowned in thy contemplation?
Dost thou love picking meat? Or wouldst thou see
A man in the clouds, and hear him speak to thee?
Wouldst thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep?
Or wouldst thou in a moment laugh and weep?
Wouldst thou lose thyself and catch no harm?
And find thyself again without a charm?
Wouldst read thyself, and read thou know'st not what,
And yet know whether thou art blest or not,
By reading the same lines? Oh then, come hither,
And lay my book, thy head, and heart together.

(Lights up on the center book; Bunyan crosses to the dressing trunk)

READING 14. (2 MEN, 1 WOMAN, 1 BLIND FEMALE CHILD) **BUNYAN, MR. COBB,
ELIZABETH, MARY**

BUNYAN: Liza, tell me you understand.

ELIZABETH: John, the children and I have nothing to live upon but the charity of good people.

COBB: If you recant, and give up your preaching, I believe I can have you released.

BUNYAN: *(To Elizabeth)* To be separated from you and the children is like tearing my flesh from the bone. *(Addressing Mary his ten year old blind daughter)* And Mary, my poor blind child, what added sorrows must befall you? *(To Elizabeth)* God forbid that our children suffer the calamities of orphans.

ELIZABETH: He must forbid it! !

COBB: Will you not change your mind? Does your conscience rest with the thought of pulling down your house on the head of your wife and children? All for your stubborn pride?

BUNYAN: Neighbor Cobb, I believe there is a clear path for every honest soul. How we respond to each challenge we face will determine our progress upon it. We can make choices, Cobb. We can overcome evil or be overcome by it. *(To his eldest daughter)* Now my dear Mary, you will not forget to pray for me?

MARY: Nor to bring you something to eat, Father. *(She offers him some food)*

ELIZABETH: As poor people, what hope do we have for justice?

BUNYAN: *(He lets blind Mary touch his face through the bars).* Liza, we must put our hope in what we know yet cannot see. *(JAILOR enters to escort ELIZABETH and blind MARY away)*

ELIZABETH: I love you John.

BUNYAN: And I love you. We shall be together soon. As God wills it.