



Causes of the Civil War

Characters

John Brown
Watson Brown
James Redpath

Robert E. Lee
Jeb Stuart
John Henry Kagi

Setting

This reader's theater begins in Virginia at the execution of John Brown. The story then goes back in time to Brown's home in Kansas. After giving an interview to James Redpath, Brown makes his way across the nation to raise an army. He decides that Harpers Ferry, Virginia is the perfect place for a slave uprising. But, things go terribly wrong when the United States Army, under the command of Robert E. Lee confront Brown. The story returns and ends at Brown's execution in Virginia.



Act I

- James Redpath:** It does not seem possible that in a few minutes John Brown will meet his death in the gallows.
- Jeb Stuart:** Colonel Lee, did you see the coffin on the horse-drawn wagon over there?
- Robert E. Lee:** That is Brown's coffin. They want to be able to take his body away as soon as this is over.
- Jeb Stuart:** There was some talk in town this morning that the hand of God would snatch him from his cell and take him straight to heaven.
- James Redpath:** I have heard whispers that there are armed men hiding in the forest around here. They are waiting to rescue Brown and take him away.
- Robert E. Lee:** No matter where I go, I see newspapers like yours, James, that tell the story of Brown.
- Jeb Stuart:** I heard that he only grew the beard after coming out this way to Harpers Ferry. He wanted to disguise himself.



Robert E. Lee: One thing I know for sure, people are passionate about what they think of Brown. Some people call him a madman. But after today, he will be a martyr.

Jeb Stuart: How can anyone look at Brown as a hero? Don't they know that he is responsible for brutally murdering unarmed men?

James Redpath: I have been writing about John Brown for a few years now. At one time, I thought of Brown as a hero. I met him for the first time just three years ago. Let me tell you that story.

Act 2

Watson Brown: Father, James Redpath is here to see you. He is a reporter from *Harpers Illustrated Magazine*.

John Brown: Yes, son, I have agreed to speak with him.

James Redpath: Mr. Brown, thank you for allowing me to come to your camp in Osawatomie.



John Brown: Mr. Redpath, this is my son, Watson. This is John Henry Kagi, my second in command. I am glad you are here. I want my message to be heard by all so that I can build my army.

James Redpath: What message is that, Mr. Brown?

John Brown: Slavery is a national sin that stains the souls of all Americans. No American can expect to be saved from hell until slavery is abolished. I will start a race war, one that will wipe out slavery.

James Redpath: Watson, is this view shared by your entire family?

Watson Brown: Mr. Redpath, Father was raised by an abolitionist. It is all he has ever known.

John Brown: Watson is right. When I was only 12 years old, I stayed with neighbors who owned a slave my age. The boy was ill clothed and poorly fed. He had been separated from his parents and was confused. It is hard for me to talk about this.

Watson Brown: Father, allow me. The boy made a small mistake and his owner beat him senseless with a shovel.