

King Saul
Sample: Act I

1.1

1 [*Enter Samuel, with Joel and Abijah his sons, Above*]
2 [*A crowd of Israelites assemble*]

Samuel

3 Decades has *Samuel* been judge of *Israel*,
4 And the Lord *God* has always parted right
5 And wrong distinct as Sun and Moon, that nothing
6 Has e're been secret from my keen discerning.
7 I have caution'd ye all against the False
8 And Evil Gods, *Astartes* and False *Baals*,
9 And when ye wanted for the Law, 'twas I
10 Reminded ye of it. And all of you
11 Have honor'd this, *God's* Law. But now, in this
12 My dwindling time of age and frailty, I
13 Have set equal authority upon
14 My sons, wise *Joel*, and cunning *Abijah*,
15 That they lighten the heavy mantle of
16 Discerning from mine head. We have serv'd you,
17 Ye many thousand Get of *Abraham*,
18 To reap but vinegar from your thankless mouths?
19 Do ye all cry out still for Tyranny,
20 Calling to your judges, *We shall have a king?*

Joel

21 They do, Father.

Abijah

22 They do not respect us.

An Israelite

23 Give us a king!

Second Israelite

24 For we will have a king!

Israelites

25 Yes! We will have a king!

Samuel

26 Be silent!
27 We give you Law, the Lord *God* gives you Law,
28 And you would scatter th' Book t'accept a Yoke?

29 Rather you'd bow and scrape to mortal man
 30 Than to our Lord, the Perfect *God*? Why? Speak.
 31 How have my learned sons fail'd you, that you
 32 Prefer a blasphemous commander? King?
 33 Why take a King over a Judge? Why? Speak.
 34 You all desired Speech but moments ago,
 35 Why mute as stones and trees? Do you see *God*,
 36 Our perfect Lord, perching on my shoulders?
 37 Do'st hear him in my voice, condemning you?
 38 Speak! What is it within my sons that makes
 39 Them so abominable? answer me.

Third Israelite

40 Your sons, o Judge, they are corrupt; they answer
 41 Our pleas for Justice with outstretch'd, itching palms:
 42 For we who have no means to buy our justice,
 43 We wish a King.

Joel

44 Father, art thou ill?

Fourth Israelite

45 And many enemies
 46 Still look on Israel with a hateful eye.
 47 We need a great commander who will cause
 48 Our foes to tremble, Who will strike a blow
 49 To knock our adversaries down. We need
 50 A King.

Abijah

51 Behold, Brother, he looks with vacant eyes,
 52 Perceiving naught.

Fifth Israelite

53 And who will rule us when *Samuel*
 54 Is dead? What line, what family will our
 55 Lord God, that perfect Monarch, rule us through?
 56 We need a king.

All Israelites

57 Agreed! We'll have a king!

Samuel

58 Enough! Whil'st you were croaking for a King,
 59 Like frogs a'hopping toward that cursed *Pharoah*,
 60 The Lord *God* has reveal'd his will to me:

61 Presently, one is walking to our town
62 Whom *God* hath chosen, and that man will be
63 Your King. But be forwarn'd: this king will break
64 The Laws of *Moses* and of *God*, the Lord
65 Has told me all: he will sell all your wives
66 And children into slavery, Cattle
67 And property will all be lost by him,
68 And we shall be a Kingdom, like all others,
69 To suffer under him, blaspheming man,
70 And not beneath the Just and Perfect *God*.
71 Man craveth Imperfections as his Meat,
72 And feeds on errors like th' Chameleon.
73 Would ye still have a King as other nations?

All Israelites

74 Yes! We'd have a king as other nations!

Samuel

75 It shall be so. Disperse, and tomorrow
76 I shall anoint your King. Away. Begone.

77 [*The assembled Israelites disperse*]

Joel

78 O Father was this wise, to make a King?

Samuel

79 'Twas the Lord *God's* will, who can counter Him?

Abijah

80 This king, he shall make slaves of us, Father?

Samuel

81 'Twas *God* commanded it. Who questions Him?

Joel

82 O Father, hast thou sided with these men,
83 Our enemies, who call us bribe-takers?

Samuel

84 Look into mine eyes *Joel*, and say that thou
85 Art innocent.

Joel

86 Your eyes judge with fire Father.

Samuel

87 Then counter not with th' wilting ice of shame,
88 But answer flame with flame.

Abijah

89 Will you not take
90 Your children's words?

Samuel

91 I'll have their words and eyes.
92 Look thou *Abijah*, and thou *Joel*, show my
93 Discerning eyes, the proof that *God* is with me,
94 Show these eyes thine innocence.

Joel

95 Father, I
96 Cannot.

Abijah

97 Nor I dread Judge, I fear the one
98 And perfect Lord. I have betray'd you, Father.

Joel

99 Say not we have betray'd him Brother, but
100 That we have fallen short, for *God* favors
101 Us not. We are not *Samuel*.

Abijah

102 O Father,
103 Show thy Mercy to us, Do not destroy
104 Thy sons; why do you turn your back on us,
105 As if to walk away? I beg thee Father,
106 Slay me not, poor Judges though we be.

Joel

107 Slay not your sons, though we be poor judges.

Samuel

108 The wicked Judges of *Israel* I banish,
109 Smite and slay, but for my Sons, the Lord *God*,
110 That Perfect Judge, He speaketh not. I am
111 Free then to show my Mercy: thou art not
112 A Judge *Abijah*, nor thou *Joel*. 'Tis well,
113 For soon 'twill be a time when no Judge is
114 Heeded: this King shall be the end of *God's*
115 Covenant. Help an Old Man down, my Sons.

116 [*Enter Saul, with his Slave*]

Saul

117 Let's go back or my Father will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying
118 about us.

Slave

119 Master, there was great pomp and ceremony here but moments past. Where have the
120 townsmen gone?

Samuel

121 So soon my Lord?

Saul

122 Who is there? Is that the village elder?

Samuel

123 That is the man the Lord *God* told me of.
124 He is the one who is to govern us.

Saul

125 Greetings, *Saul* is my name. Your greatness tells me you must be *Samuel*, high and
126 renowned.

Samuel

127 I am he. Worry not for the mules you seek, they are found. Thou art a great man from a
128 great Family. Shalt thou do great service to the Lord?

Saul

129 Am I not from the smallest Tribe of *Israel*? And from the least Family in *Benjamin*?
130 Why do you speak like this to me?

Samuel

131 Tell your Slave to go on ahead, but you stand here a moment so I may reveal to you the
132 word of *God*.

Saul

133 Go with them. I yearn for the Word, meager though I am.

134 [*The Brothers exit with the Slave.*]

Samuel

135 I here anoint thee, and with a kiss proclaim
136 *Yahweh* has anointed you leader of
137 His people. You shall rescue them from the

138 Pow'r of the enemies that surround them.

Saul

139 I beg thee, let this pass from me. I am not a man of Greatness.

Samuel

140 This is the destiny that *God* has given
 141 Unto thee, thou must take it up. The Lord
 142 *God* told me of thy coming, the people
 143 Of *Israel* cry out for a King, for thee.

Saul

144 This crown is not for me. Send my slave after; I must leave you.

Samuel

145 Tarry yet. Undertake this Diadem,
 146 That Mantle *God* has cast to thee to serve
 147 And Save thy people, that is thy Doom.

Saul

148 I cast away that Mantle, as foul as
 149 A worm-fed rag. Place ye that Diadem
 150 Into mine hands, and I shall fling it far
 151 As th' fi'ry Sun extends across the Sky.
 152 This, your Doom, take ye that back, and Save these
 153 Our people, as a Judge and Seer should.
 154 There is no King of *Israel* but *God*.

155 [*Exit Saul*]

Samuel

156 Lord, saturate my dry and powd'ry Bones,
 157 Fill them up, instill your potent Might, here,
 158 I persevere to doom my people with
 159 A fatal Fate, a Doom of death, thy Doom.
 160 Would you withhold the strength your servant needs
 161 Unwillingly, unfaithfully to cast
 162 Your Curse upon another, more unwilling?
 163 Blaspheming man, yea, we are weak: we need
 164 Thy fingers in our shoulders, thy Breath in
 165 Our Breasts, thy clenched Fist around our Hearts.
 166 Show him, Lord *God*, pray fill that doomed vessel
 167 With Spirit everlasting, all enduring,
 168 Show him, show us, blasphemers, thy Might,
 169 That it might yet be said throughout the Earth,
 170 *Who is like the Lord? Who here of pretty Flesh*

171 *Can bend his Rocks? Can smolder Sunlight? Who*
 172 *Among we weak Humanity, should break his Will?*
 173 Why none: For blessed Fortune or for damn'd
 174 And bloodiest Doom, the Fatal Fate, Destruction,
 175 We are thine! I feel thy hands, Almighty:
 176 Call out for *Israel!* Assemble here,
 177 And we will draw lots for our nation's King!

178 [*Exit Samuel*]

1.2

179 [*Three or four musicians enter and play. Three or four Prophets enter, they listen to the*
 180 *music and fall into fits. Saul enters. He listens to the music and falls into a fit. In time, the*
 181 *music stops. The Musicians and Prophets leave Saul alone, who later exits.*]

1.3

182 [*Horns. Enter Nahash King of the Ammonites, with his army and an Israelite Messenger*]

Nahash

183 By right of Conquest *Israel* is mine.
 184 *Nahash* shall rule this petty swine-fear'd Land,
 185 And let those Jews who threaten me learn greater
 186 Wisdom by th'Might of my fearsome Thumbs. What hither?

Messenger

187 We beg you mercy Liege.

Nahash

188 Hold him fast,
 189 I'll here expose my mercy, pierce thine Eyn
 190 And feed it to the Dogs. Here taste thy Wisdom.

Messenger

191 O God! Protect me God!

Nahash

192 I am the King,
 193 The *Ammonites* will conquer where they please
 194 For what anointed Monarch could prevent
 195 My Steel? Go out, anointed Messenger
 196 And seek for any Champion, God chosen,
 197 Who might defend your cause. Be off with you.

198 [*Messenger exits*]

Nahash

199 And tell your Champion, that ev'ry Eye
 200 Of *Israel* shall be expung'd to curse
 201 The Sinister: a Nation of Cyclops
 202 Shall I o'erlord, if none will vouchsafe you.

203 [*Exeunt*]

1.4

204 [*Samuel enters with a Priest, his sons Joel and Abijah, holding a crown and cloak. At*
 205 *each call, more Israelites appear*]

Samuel

206 Today you have rejected *God* and said,
 207 *Appoint a King to lead us*. Now take your
 208 Positions before *God* by Tribe and Clan.
 209 Ye Sons of *Israel*, Assemble here.
 210 Assemble, of the Tribe of *Joseph*.
 211 Of *Zebulun* and *Simeon*. Arise,
 212 And take your place, ye Get of *Dan*
 213 And *Gad*, of *Issachar* and *Judah*. Come,
 214 Ye Sons of *Benjamin* and *Asher*, Sons
 215 Of *Reuben*, *Levi*, and *Naphtali*. Come,
 216 And meet your tyrant Lord, Commander, He
 217 Who leads us into death, forsakes the light
 218 Of Holy Judgment, but yet paves our Path
 219 To Perdition with blood from our enemies.
 220 O Holy Priest, hast thou the lots.

Priest

221 Yea Judge,
 222 Accounted here, just *Samuel*, are the lives
 223 And names of ev'ry Man of *Israel*,
 224 Of ev'ry Tribe and Clan and Family.
 225 As always, *God* above will guide blind *Chance*.
 226 Let them step forward of the Tribe of *Benjamin*.
 227 Step forward of the Clan of *Matri*.
 228 Now hear the Name that *God* has call'd our King.
 229 Step forward *Saul* the son of *Kish*.

Joel

230 Approach.
 231 Where resides he, the man who'd have our Place?

Abijah

232 Does he exist? or is't a Coward?

Samuel

233 Stop:
234 Locate this man, where is the Son of *Kish*?

First Israelite

235 We have found him.

Second Israelite

236 He was hiding, o Judge.

237 [*Saul is revealed*]

Samuel

238 See the one *Yahweh* has chosen? There is
239 None like him among all the people: *Saul*.

Israelites

240 Long live the king!

Third Israelite

241 How can this man save us?

Fourth Israelite

242 Look, I see a Coward. He hides among the Baggage.

Third Israelite

243 He cannot save us.

244 [*They exit*]

Samuel

245 Come, take your heavy fate, embrace the crown
246 And let the cloak embraceth you. A Sword
247 Shalt have, and Scepter too, and they'll reveal
248 Thy destiny, as *God* through his own Sword
249 And Scepter shows us ours.

Saul

250 O let it pass.
251 I am no King, and have no wish to lead
252 My people, *Israel*, to death. Release
253 Me *Yahweh*, let me slither out from your
254 Immutable grip, foul Serpent that I am.
255 A Snake my slip his bonds, if *God* hath Mercy
256 On foul and caitiff Sucklings such as I.

257 [*Saul runs off*]

Fifth Israelite

258 Return to us *Saul*, lead us, rule *Israel*.

259 [*Several Israelites run after him*]

Samuel

260 Be Patient *Israel*. With Blood shall King
261 *Saul* rule his people. *God* shall return him
262 To us along that selfsame redden'd Road.

263 [*Exeunt omnes*]

1.5

264 [*Saul enters*]

Saul

265 Shall this humiliation shield my life,
266 And such a worthless life to buy so dear.
267 I've damn'd my name, but not my Family,
268 And God may yet forgive; and if he makes
269 My guilt eternal, ignominious
270 My name, 'tis Doom embrac'd more happily
271 Than this, his spiked crown that pierce my fingers,
272 Than this, a clenching cloak that seeks to smother.
273 There, and be gone you Cape of Fools, for who
274 But Fools would take that Crown and be a King
275 Of Death? Welcome *Perdition*, summon me
276 And save me from this Curse, this Earth. I'll hold
277 Thee in fast frosted arms, decaying with
278 A smile, that my beloved *Israel*
279 Is safe from me, its greatest Enemy.

280 [*The cry of many people is heard. A Messenger enters*]

Saul

281 What cry? Wherefore that sound; the people weep?

Messenger

282 *Nahash*, King of the *Ammonites*, has laid
283 A Siege on all *Gibeah*. He has goug'd
284 The right eyes of all the people to shame
285 The House of *Israel*. Some fled, but he
286 Has found us, and means to destroy us all.
287 We begg'd for mercy, to become his slaves,

288 Yet even then the devil held delight
 289 In shaming us. *I will make treaty with*
 290 *You*, says he, *only if I may gouge out*
 291 *The right eye of every one of you, thus*
 292 *Disgracing all of Israel.* Yet if
 293 There's none will come to rescue us, we must
 294 Submit to pain'd humility and Servitude.

Saul

295 Has your enterprise met with any fortune?

Messenger

296 None, I am soon returning to mine own
 297 Humiliation, failing in service
 298 To *Israel, Gibeah*, and my people,
 299 For who could marshal all the scatter'd men
 300 Of *Israel*, even against a threat
 301 As great as total Subjugation?
 302 Go not *Gibeah's* way, that road leads
 303 But to the end o' th' Sons of *Israel*.
 304 I'll take my leave.

Saul

305 Hold. The Spirit of *God*
 306 Is in me: Speak O Lord, and fill me with
 307 Thy righteous fury. I shall make a pledge
 308 Of warlike craftsmen, we'll design a temple
 309 Of gruesome massacres. My people shall
 310 Be Safe, e'en at the cost of Doom. Arise
 311 Thou gilded, fatal Ring, and rest upon
 312 My heavy brow. Enfold me, grave and weighty
 313 Roy'l Cloak, that my Shoulders might grow stronger,
 314 Beneath thine hard oppression. Give strength
 315 O *God*, through suffering, and I
 316 Shall pay it back in Blood and Doom. So be it:
 317 I am *Saul*, the King of *Israel*!
 318 Go Messenger, and take this horrid badge
 319 Of Fate, and tell all *Israel* that blood
 320 Shall be upon the hands and head of any
 321 That would refuse me fealty; tell them come
 322 To *Saul* their King, and make an army that
 323 Would cause the *Earth* itself to tremble. Go,
 324 And tell them *Saul* delivereth the Lands
 325 The Lord hath promis'd us. Summon my men.

326 [*The Messenger exits*]

Saul

327 Now let the ground shiver at the mention
 328 Of the Almighty *God*. Thy weight o Lord,
 329 Is fearsome and fatal, I thank thee then,
 330 That thou visit these punishments on me
 331 And not another. Now, I seize my Doom.

332 [*Exit*]

1.6

333 [*Many Alarums. Saul and Samuel fight against the Ammonites. Ammonites retreat.*]
 334 [*Enter Saul and Nahash, severally*]

Nahash

335 Where is that wav'ry pole, that giant boy
 336 Who toss'd those Jewish dogs at me, and like
 337 A Slave who casts his dirt into his Master's
 338 Face, blinds his Better only to better please
 339 His lowly squawking nature, thus this o'rstretch'd
 340 Sapling, this yew-boy means to catapult
 341 His filth, his Jewish drops at me, his Master.
 342 Would'st thou repel my Majesty, you who
 343 Would flee from swine like devils? Ha, run, boy,
 344 Flee you lesser man of a lesser house
 345 Of a lesser race. Fly you king of Cyclops,
 346 You twisted Vulcan who would be a king.

Saul

347 You! Would you have the eyes and dignity
 348 Of all my nation and my family?
 349 Wouldst thou have eyes? Then come and take mine first!

350 [*They fight. Saul wounds Nahash and throws him to the ground.*
 351 *Withal he pierces his right eye and slays him.*]
 352 [*Alarums. The Ammonites are defeated and they retreat*]
 353 [*Enter Saul and Samuel with the Israelites*]

Israelite

354 Where are those who denied Saul's crown? Hand those men over so we can put them to
 355 death!

Israelites

356 To death o Judge, to Death!

Saul

357 No one shall be put to death today.

Samuel

358 Then burn the Bodies of our Enemies,
359 And let cerulean skies be blotted out
360 With th' Smoke of their degenerate Coarses.
361 To *Gilgal*. There shall I return this Crown,
362 And call this man before our *God* and country,
363 King *Saul*, the first King of *Israel*!

Israelites

364 Long live the King! King *Saul*! Long live the King!

365 [*Exeunt omnes. A procession, with much rejoicing, where Samuel crowns Saul king.*
366 *Offerings are burnt and there is great rejoicing.*]

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