



Lion of Freedom Synopsis

Scene 1: William Lloyd Garrison comes on stage and explains how he founded the American Anti-Slavery Society and how he discovered Frederick Douglass. We are then transported to the 1841 Bristol County Anti-Slavery Convention in Nantucket, where Frederick has his first opportunity to speak. With a withering condemnation of slavery, he brings the house down with his memorable chant, “No struggle no progress, draw a line in the sand, power concedes nothing without a demand, time to step and draw a line in the sand. Take a stand!”

Scene 2: William Lloyd Garrison again comes on stage and informs us that we will go back a few years and examine how Frederick went from a slave to a stellar career. As we flashback to 1833, we learn that Frederick has been loaned out to a so-called slave breaker named Edward Covey for being a troublesome slave. When Covey learns that Frederick has been teaching his fellow slaves to read and write, he begins to brutally whip Frederick. Frederick challenges Covey to release him and fight unrestrained. Covey does so but Frederick furiously beats him into submission. Frederick vows to be free someday.

Scene 3: Acting as narrator, Garrison again comes on stage and informs us that Frederick’s escape attempt has landed him in jail. Due to his brilliant mind, familiarity with the Bible, and ability to read and write, Frederick has been acting as a preacher in the local Sharp Street Baltimore AME church. As the congregation assembles, the men congratulate Frederick on beating Edward Covey. Frederick has become somewhat of a celebrity. As Frederick conducts the church service, Anna Murray arrives, sits down in the front row and purposely distracts Frederick. He stumbles through his sermon and a comical scene ensues. Anna and Frederick

plan to meet later in the week. Anna's friends are distressed to hear that she, as a free woman, is in a relationship with a slave. Anna formulates a plan to set Frederick free.

Scene 4: Garrison comes on stage to inform us of Frederick's intention of asking Anna for her hand in marriage. It is 1838 and Frederick is working down at the Baltimore docks mending sails and calking ships. A nervous Frederick haltingly asks Anna to marry him. She initially says no but adds a condition. She has planned Frederick's escape from Baltimore to New York. Only then will she marry him. Frederick agrees. After a harrowing trip, Frederick arrives in New York as a free man. Both Frederick and Anna are overjoyed and the marriage ceremony concludes with Senegalese dancing and singing.

Scene 5: We return to the 1841 timeline. William Lloyd Garrison comes to Anna and Frederick's house in New Bedford to offer Frederick a place on his staff as an orator. Frederick is elated and vows to bring an end to bondage. However, Anna is worried about the time Frederick will spend away from the family.

Scene 6: Frederick and Garrison travel to over 20 cities preaching the gospel of abolition. It is Frederick's trial period and this 24 year-old does not disappoint. Garrison invites Frederick to travel to Britain to raise money for the cause. Frederick delivers over 175 speeches. While in the U.K. Anna Richardson and her brother secure the freedom of Douglass by paying Frederick's owner the sum of \$711.66. Douglass returns to the U.S. as a free man.

Scene 7: In 1847 Frederick continues to tour and preach abolition. Anna and Frederick move to Rochester. Frederick starts his own newspaper and begins to move away from the William Lloyd Garrison abolitionist dogma. Frederick's British friend, Julia Griffiths, comes to the U.S. to help Frederick with his newspaper. Anna is not happy when Julia moves into to the Douglass house. At the American Anti-slavery meeting William Lloyd Garrison denounces Frederick for not following his abolitionist principles. Frederick realizes he has outgrown the Garrisonian dogma and pledges to make his own way. Julia Griffiths purchases the mortgage to the Douglass house.

Scene 8: The feud between Douglass and Garrison continues to heat up with Garrison printing slanderous accusations concerning Julia Griffiths and a possible torrid affair. Frederick confronts Garrison and a heated argument ensues.. At the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society meeting Frederick delivers his legendary July 5th speech. Anna vows to throw Julia out of the house

Scene 9: Douglass and Garrett Smith team up to denounce the Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court. John Brown drops by the Douglass house to recruit Frederick in his Harper's Ferry scheme. Otilie Assing visits Frederick and Anna. She wants to translate Frederick's

autobiography into German and work on his newspaper. Suddenly the Federal Marshalls burst in and attempt to arrest Frederick but he has already fled. Little Annie, Frederick's ten-year-old daughter, is awakened by the chaos. Anna sings a lullaby.

Scene 10 Douglass flees to Scotland to avoid being arrested as a co-conspirator with John Brown. He receives a letter from his wife Anna about the death of their young daughter Annie.

Scene 11 Otilie Assing and Anna have an altercation. The Civil War begins and Frederick prepares a speech in support of the war. Douglass is disappointed in Lincoln's performance as president. Montgomery Blair visits Douglass and attempts to interest him in Lincoln's so-called colonization program. In a heated discussion Frederick dismisses colonization as nothing more than overt racism and expatriation. When Frederick's sons pay a visit, the family pledges their support of the war and the eradication of slavery.

Scene 12 Douglass and 6,000 attendees await the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1st, 1863. The party consists of New England's most famous literati and well-know abolitionists.

Scene 13 Frederick travels south to meet President Lincoln at the White House, but before he meets Lincoln he can't help having a little fun with two southern gentlemen. Douglass and Lincoln have a frank but productive conversation.

Scene 14 The Civil War concludes with over 4 million dead. Frederick and Anna finally have a moment to themselves. Douglass feels like the best part of his life is over now that slavery has been abolished. Anna reminds Frederick that there is still much to be done in the reconstruction phase. Otilie Assing tells Frederick of her intention to return to Europe. She asks if Frederick would like to join her. Anna is relieved to hear that Otilie is leaving. Montgomery Blair stops by to offer the position of U.S. Marshall for the District of Columbia to Frederick. As the Douglass family celebrates this great honor, they discover the house is on fire.

Scene 15 With his new job, Anna and Frederick move to D.C. Anna is not pleased.

Scene 16 After decades away, Frederick returns to his old Maryland church. He receives a letter from his old slave master Captain Thomas Auld. The old captain invites Frederick to come to his plantation and allow him to make amends for the long years of slavery and torture.

Scene 17 After a long illness Anna becomes bedridden. The family gathers around her bed as she passes away.

Scene 18 Frederick is distraught at the death of Anna, but things change when Helen Pitts joins the staff at the D.C. records office where Frederick is CEO. After a few months Helen and Frederick are secretly married. They must deal with the turmoil a mixed race marriage creates.

Scene 19 In 1895 and after 11 years of marriage, Frederick passes away from heart failure. The outpouring of grief by the populace was tremendous, except of course for the South.