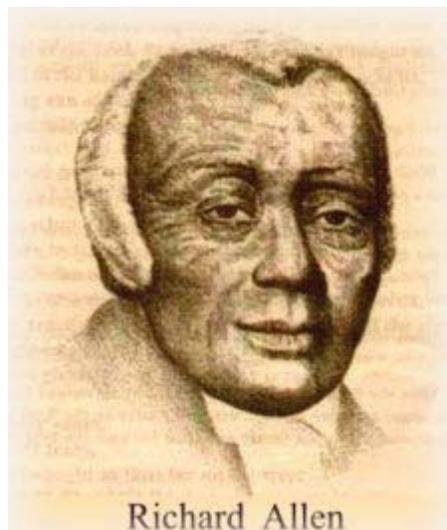


## THE COST OF FREEDOM

*Original Stage Play*

*By*

*Cleveland O. McLeish*



Richard Allen

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

Francis Asbury  
Richard Allen  
Freeborn  
Stokely  
George  
Slave 1  
Slave 2  
Slave 3  
Francis  
Green

## **SCENE 1**

### **LIGHTS UP**

Francis Asbury is standing CS.

He holds his head up to address the audience.

FRANCIS: They say heroes are not born...they are made. That may be true. I want to tell you story about a great man we seldom hear about in black history. His name is Richard Allen (pause) I see all those eyebrows raising. Some of you are hearing that name for the first time. Richard Allen was the founder of the AME church. This is his story.

### **LIGHTS OUT**

## **SCENE 2**

### **LIGHTS UP**

A young Richard Allen is standing CS with his three brothers...their heads are Bowed as they await inspection.

Stokeley Sturgis enters.

He carefully looks at the boys one at a time. Satisfied he shakes his head Affirmatively and exits.

### **LIGHTS OUT**

### **SCENE 3**

#### **LIGHTS UP**

Richard serves tea to Stokely who is going through some paperwork.

STOKELY: Thank you Richard.

RICHARD: Will that be all sir?

STOKELY: No. Have a seat. I've been meaning to talk to you.

RICHARD: If it pleases you I prefer to stand sir.

STOKELY: Suit yourself. (sips tea) People are complaining that you are bothering them down by the church.

RICHARD: me Sir, I don't bother nobody. I sit quietly at the back and just listen to Gods word.

STOKELY: That's not what I hear.

RICHARD: Sir, people will say anything.

STOKELY: Yes they will....but that don't mean we gonna give them something to say. That's a white mans church you are visiting and to say it simple Richard, they don't like you.

RICHARD: Jesus didn't come for the white men only. He came for everybody. That's what it says in the book.

STOKELY: I will not dispute what you believe and if it was up to me...I couldn't care less if you wanted to go to church or not....but unfortunately it is not up to me. Do you understand?

RICHARD: What will you have me do sir?

STOKELY: Stay away from that church.

RICHARD: But the book says that we should not forsake the assembly of ourselves together.

Pause.

STOKELY: Well you hear what I say....do not go back to that church. Go find another church somewhere or form one even but do not go back to that church.....you hear me.

Pause.

**LIGHTS OUT**

## SCENE 4

### LIGHTS UP

Richard is at CS armed with books and a pencil teaching himself to read and Write.

Enter George....

GEORGE: What you doing this time man?

RICHARD: Teaching myself to read and write.

GEORGE: Really. That's cool.

RICHARD: Can you read?

GEORGE: Yeah man. Reading is easy stuff.

RICHARD: Okay. (hands him a open book) Read that.

GEORGE: Can't man. I left my glasses.

RICHARD: I've never seen you in glasses.

GEORGE: I don't need them. Slaves aren't allowed to read anything. We just work.

RICHARD: Don't you want to do more like read for example.

GEORGE: I said I could read.

RICHARD: Yeah well...the first step to learning anything is to be willing first to admit that you can't do it.

GEORGE: I can READ.

RICHARD: Sure you can. Anyway did you need me for something.

GEORGE: Naw. Just came to mess with you a little.

RICHARD: Can you do that tomorrow.

GEORE: Why?

RICHARD: Cause I really need to do this.

GEORGE: Why?

Pause.

RICHARD: Can you keep a secret?

GEORGE: Yeah.

Pause.

RICHARD: I'm thinking of starting my own church.

Pause.

GEORGE: okay I think its time you put those books down... you see what reading does... it makes you talk crazy (short Pause) start your own church.... Please I would love to see you pull that off.

RICHARD: if I did Would you come?

GEORGE: Why? God is for white men...free men. Not slaves.

RICHARD: God is for everyone.

GEORGE: Yeah...so you say. Believing in some thing does not make it real.... Look around you does it look like God is for everyone.

RICHARD: You're my brother George. I don't want you to be left behind.

GEORGE: if I'm gonna have to serve the same God as them white folks then by all means please leave me behind and Please...no preaching. My ears itch. I don't need God....or one of your heaven messages. I just want to be free.

RICHARD: Freedom will come.

GEORGE: Yeah...you been saying that for three years. Anyway, I got a barn to clean and horses to feed.

George exits.

Richard gets back to what he was doing.

**LIGHTS OUT**