

Building

by

Mickey Bolmer

(two acts, 7, history)

Mother  
Helen Starrett  
newly married  
raped repeatedly  
August 21, 1863  
bushwackers waiting for the signal to ride into  
to  
burn Lawrence, Kansas  
rape the women  
hang the preachers  
to William Starrett, new preacher, not hung  
then  
five boys, two girls  
struggle  
new life  
out of fire and rape  
building  
the United States of America  
largest, tallest, central  
buildings, cities, 20th century life  
Empire State Building

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"Helen and SheS" performed August 7, 2012 as part of Culture Project's Impact 2012  
"The War on Women 24 hour play festival"  
directed by Jeremy Karafin

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## Building

### Characters

Helen Ekin Starrett (born September 19, 1840)

William Aiken Starrett 3rd/William Aiken Starrett 4th

(W.A.S. 3rd born January 3, 1834/ W.A.S 4th born June 14, 1877)

William Clarke Quantrill/George Fuller/Harry Black

Theodore Starrett

(born April 21, 1864; his brothers recorded it as January 21, 1865; both ages will be given. His nickname is The; it rhymes with "he." Where the name The appears in the text it will be put in italics.)

Paul Starrett

(born November 26, 1866)

Ralph Starrett

(born July 24, 1868)

Helen Starrett

(born April 14, 1872)

### Sets

1. On the curtain or a scrim, the observation deck of the Empire State Building, looking west
2. Prologue and Act 1: center stage, the foundation and floor of a balloon frame house, the frame of the front wall is up, other walls ready for raising
3. Act 2: one or more cages of a steel framed tall building

### Acts and Scenes

#### Prologue

September 1, 1863 in Lawrence, Kansas, and then May 1, 1931, the observation deck of the Empire State Building

#### Act 1

I-1: 1862-1878 near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and then at the Starrett's home just outside Lawrence, Kansas

I-2: April 14, 1883 in the back yard of the house where the Starretts are living, Highland Park, outside of Chicago, Illinois

#### Act 2

II-1: Spring 1889, a construction site in Chicago, Illinois

II-2: January 1, 1892, the steel frame, the top of the Masonic Temple, Chicago, Illinois

II-3: July 5, 1894, *The's* room in the Starrett's home in Chicago, Illinois

II-4: 1896, in front of Paul's home under construction in Kenilworth, Illinois

II-5: 1898-1904, various in New York City, New York and Washington, D.C.

II-6: December 25, 1904, the steel frame of the Plaza Hotel, New York City, New York

Prologue

(September 1, 1863, on the shell of the Starrett home, Lawrence, Kansas, and then  
May 1, 1931, the observation deck of the Empire State Building)

HELEN EKIN (almost 23)

(working to put in the glass transom over the front door)

William!

WILLIAM 3RD (29)

Yes

HELEN EKIN

William! William Aiken Starrett the 3rd wake up and help me put in this transom.

WILLIAM 3RD

Yes

HELEN EKIN

Come here, my child, and tell me what you hear.

WILLIAM 3RD

My child, my son

THE

(This is a vision, so it could be just a voice.)

Father?

WILLIAM 3RD

Yes, son?

THE

Today,

WILLIAM 3RD

Yes, August 21, 1874

THE

old Ben told me

WILLIAM 3RD

August 21, 1863

THE

Father?

WILLIAM 3RD

Yes, Quantrill and his Missouri bushwhackers attacked Lawrence, Lawrence, Kansas.  
Ben should not

THE

I asked him. He said they burned the town. And

WILLIAM 3RD

Yes

THE

killed many people, hung the preachers, and...the dictionary

WILLIAM 3RD

Ben can't read.

THE

No, Father, I, the dictionary says "rape" is "forced sexual intercourse."

WILLIAM 3RD

There are other definitions but you are correct; that was Ben's meaning, but the dictionary, son, glosses. Rape has nothing to do with sexual intercourse. What does "inter" mean?

THE

between

WILLIAM 3RD

"course"?

THE

a progress

WILLIAM 3RD

Good work, son, so define sexual intercourse

THE

a sexual progress between people

WILLIAM 3RD

"progress"?

THE

"progress" as in The Pilgrim's Progress.

WILLIAM 3RD

Yes, my bright boy. Sexual?

THE

Mating

WILLIAM 3RD

Yes, do not blush my farm boy, an erect penis, a ready womb, these are not sinful; how could man's and woman's

HELEN EKIN

(with him)

and woman's

WILLIAM 3RD

God given parts in new life be sinful? So what is the gloss, an analogy please?

THE

Sexual intercourse is to rape as

WILLIAM 3RD

love is to war. God, son, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah to end, for all time, rape.

THE

I

WILLIAM 3RD

No, son, the rapists, turned the story to serve their own ends. Go now, flee, do not turn back, even to look.

HELEN EKIN

Thank you, William. Rest if you can; build your house when you can, do not fear a son you will not have.

(Walks into the setting sun, William watching. The curtain or scrim with the observation deck of the Empire State Building drops between Helen Ekin and William 3rd. It is opening day, May 1, 1931)

WILLIAM 3RD and 4TH

(William looking west)

I

HELEN (age 59)

(entering and adjusting William's clothing to 1931.)

We, Willie. What are you seeing?