

" L U C Y   S T O N E "

By

MAUD PARK

This Copy is Script

NO. 6

**National Service Bureau**  
**Federal Theatre Project**  
**Works Progress Administration**

"LUCY STONE"

SCENE 8

SCENE EIGHT

TIME: 1869

SETTING: A committee meeting-room, Washington, D.C.

CHARLES SUMNER, tall and unbending, is seated at the head of the long table. On his left, also seated at the head of the table is HORACE GREELEY, who has a pink, baby-like face, fringed by throat whiskers, and wears shabby, crumpled clothes. On GREELEY'S L, seated below table is WENDELL PHILLIPS, a patrician in appearance. REV. SAMUEL MAY, small and sleek, sits above table on SUMNER'S R. WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON stands at the foot of the table, looking at his watch.

GARRISON

Now that our conference is over, may I remind you, gentlemen, that Mrs. Stone and the other ladies have been waiting some time. We promised to hear them at ten-thirty.

SUMNER

(with a trace of impatience)

I suppose we'll have to do it.

GREELEY

(gruffly)

Might's well get it over with.

SUMNER

Will you ask them to come in, Garrison?

(GARRISON goes out quickly, RUE)

MAY

I'm greatly relieved, Senator Sumner, to know that you feel sure of enough votes to get this fifteenth amendment through the Congress.

SUMNER

Yes, I do. But there's going to be trouble in the states when it comes to ratification.

GREELEY

I'll get busy right away on the series of editorials that I've been planning for the "Tribune".

MAY

I don't know what we'd ever have done in this anti-slavery fight without the "Tribune", Greeley.

GREELEY

Thanks, Mr. May. I've done what I could.

SUMNER

I'll be glad when this discussion with the women is over.

GREELEY

The thing to do is stick to our guns.

PHILLIPS

We mustn't forget that these ladies have been our fellow-workers all along.

GREELEY

That's well enough to say, Phillips, but---  
 (HE breaks off as LUCY STONE,  
 SUSAN B. ANTHONY, AND ELIZABETH  
 CADY STANTON enter R.U.C.,  
 followed by ANTOINETTE BLACKWELL,  
 HENRY BLACKWELL and GARRISON  
 bring up ~~at~~ the rear.)

SUMNER

How do you do, Mrs. Stone? Will you sit here, Miss Anthony?  
 (indicating chair at foot of table)

And you Mrs. Stanton?  
 (points to right of MAY)

MRS. STANTON

(seating herself)

Thank you.

SUMNER

(to ANTOINETTE)

Glad to see you Rev. Blackwell.

SUMNER (Cont'd)

(indicates chair on PHILLIPS L.  
Going back to his place at the  
table.)

Perhaps we'd better hear what these ladies have to say, for  
I shall be obliged to go to the Senate early.

(LUCY sits right of MRS. STANTON,  
HENRY sits L. of LUCY, GARRISON  
sits on ANTOINETTE'S L.)

MRS. S STANTON

Of course you know that we've come about the proposed Fif-  
teenth Amendment. We want just two words added to it.

SUMNER

What are they?

MRS. STANTON

The two words, "or sex," so it will read: "The right of  
citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied  
or abridged by the United States or by any State on account  
of race, color, previous condition of servitude, or sex."

MAY

But the amendment is intended to enfranchise the negro.

MISS ANTHONY

(emphatically)

Negro men.

MAY

(rise)

Yes, yes, of course. But if we put in the word "sex", we  
shall add an entirely different issue.

GARRISON

The arguments for negro suffrage apply equally well to  
women.

MAY

We believe the vote of the negro-----

MISS ANTHONY

(more emphatically)

Negro men.

MAY

Negro men will tend to--er-- offset the uncooperative spirit of the Southern States. Surely the free slaves will appreciate what we have done for them.

(sits)

MRS. STANTON

You mean you need the negro vote to keep your party in power?

SUMNER

That is hardly a fair interpretation of our motives, Mrs. Stanton.

HENRY

(rising from his seat, which is farthest from the table, to stand beside LUCY, and speaking quietly.)

Before 1860 these two causes moved forward together. But when the war broke out women put aside their own interests and took the places of men in factories and fields, keeping the country's needs supplied by their toil. Then after peace came, the negro man was promised a vote. Surely the women were justified in believing that the expressions of gratitude for their sacrifices would be written in to law.

(ORRILLY moves impatiently and SUMNER seems rather bored)

For years they have worked for the abolition of slavery. In return, you gentlemen have seen the justice of suffrage for women; you have been their powerful friends. Now, more than ever, they need your support; they hope you are still their friends.

(sits)

SUMNER

(rises; speaks pontifically)

Let no one doubt my devotion to the cause of woman suffrage. If I see no reason why a negro man should not vote, I have none to offer against the vote of women.

(choosing his words warily)

However...we leaders face a baffling struggle. In spite of the amendment giving the negro his freedom, the difficulty of establishing it in the South, the hesitancy of the North about suffrage for him...these conditions discourage agitation for any other reform at the present time. Before everything else the right of the negro to vote must be established forever.

(sits)

LUCY

(excited, starts to rise, but HENRY  
stops her)

A woman has the same rights a negro has....

GRIELBY

(nodding approval of SUMNER'S remarks)

This is the negro's hour.

PHILLIPS

(rises; speaks placatingly)

Believe me, we are deeply grateful to the women for their part  
in our work. However, as victory recedes into the past....  
other matters grow in importance and must perhaps be given  
precedence. We have no doubt of the justice of your claim.  
Woman suffrage and negro suffrage are both just and logical.  
But the nation will not accept two reforms at one time; that  
is why the question of suffrage must be divided and the first  
chance given to the negro.

(sits)

ANTOINETTE

(rises; like the other women, much  
alarmed by the turn of affairs)

Gentlemen, for some time past I have felt the growing coldness  
of those who were once our friends....

PHILLIPS

(raising a hand to interrupt)

Dear Lady! ....

ANTOINETTE

(trying to hold back her anger)

Are your lofty expressions of human justice, which uplifted  
the nation a short while ago, to be heard no more?

(SHE sits)

MAY

(apparently shocked)

Reverend Blackwell! .... This is a critical period for the  
party and the nation.

MISS ANTHONY

(sternly)

You used to talk about human rights, but now you concern  
yourself only with plans for saving the party.

MAY

It would be wise of you ladies to hold your claims in abeyance until the negro's right to vote is safe, beyond doubt.

GREELEY

Yes. However defensible in theory, I am satisfied that public sentiment does not demand and would not sustain at this time an innovation so sweeping and revolutionary as woman suffrage, which is at war with a distribution of duties as venerable and pervading as government itself. Moreover, most of the women have no desire to vote. I'm convinced of that.

MRS. STANTON

Mr. Greeley, before you say any more, perhaps I'd  
(SHE rises)

better give you this petition from the women of your own county...three hundred of them...who beg you to include woman suffrage in the amendment.

(SHE unrolls and offers him several large sheets of paper which HE impatiently tosses aside.)

GREELEY

Petitions are always easy to get. They don't mean much.

MRS. STANTON

(sitting)

At least won't you look at the first name?

GREELEY

(glancing hastily at the top sheet, becoming embarrassed and angry)

What. My wife's name?

(rises, glaring at MRS. STANTON)

This is your work, madam!

GARRISON

Your wife signed that petition?

GREELEY

She has been completely misled by these women. Mrs. Stanton, you and your efforts have had frequent and valuable publicity in the "Tribune", but after this outrage, I shall give orders that your name is never to appear again in our columns.



GARRISON

That's unfair Greeley.

GRESLEY

(angrily)

She had only herself to thank.

(sits)

PHILLIPS

(repressing his smile and trying to  
save an awkward moment)

To go back to our discussion-----we all have to admit that under the strain and anxiety of holding the South in line, the optimism which once exalted us has withered, and left the nation doubting and depressed.

SUMNER

(rises again pontifically)

One idea is sufficient for a generation, each to be taken in order of importance. First, negro suffrage, then temperance, then woman suffrage or the eight hour work day.

(sits)

LUCY

(rising with evident determination)

What a humiliation this is! What an insult to the women who have labored with you for thirty years for the emancipation of the slaves!

SUMNER

Mrs. Stone! Please-----

LUCY

The slaves are free and that is just---but to give them the vote and deny it to American women---how unfair!

SUMNER

All you have to do is to wait a while.

LUCY

We sympathize with the negro. Yes, he ought to have the vote! But we! We can't wait three generations for our rights.

SUMNER

Believe us, Mrs. Stone, your turn will come.

LUCY

We can't wait. We ask only what is just. For half a century, we stood with the negro in disfranchisement. It is only right that we should pass through the same door now opened to his political freedom.

MAY

If you persist in this, you can expect no help from me.

PHILLIPS

Lucy, please---I---~~am~~

LUCY

While poets and philosophers, statesmen and men of science point to women as the new hope for redemption of the race, shall the freest government on earth establish an aristocracy based on sex alone? Never has there been a worse betrayal of principle than this proposition for manhood suffrage only, in spite of all our talk of human rights.

GREENLEY

That is not the question.

LUCY

The question--the fundamental question-- is, whether women, who pay taxes and ~~pay~~ obey the laws, who in morals and intelligence are the peers of the proudest men--shall continue to be classed with the only other groups which are denied the vote; minors, lunatics, traitors, and criminals.

(SHE sits much shaken. There is a shocked silence at HER speech. Then SUMNER rises, clears his throat, and speaks with evident embarrassment.)

SUMNER

Gentlemen--and ladies---I am glad we have had this opportunity for discussion. It has--ah--cleared the air. If there is nothing else at the moment, we ---~~are~~

(HE begins gathering up his papers, SUMNER, PHILLIPS, and GREENLEY take down L.)

HENRY

(rising to speak, as the MEN at the table try to ease themselves out)

There is one thing I should like to add to what my wife has said---

HENRY (Cont'd)

(controlling himself with difficulty)

If you gentlemen desert us after we have helped you to win the fight against slavery---if you are not appalled that the women of the United States should be refused the vote, when thousands of the unfit, so long as they are male citizens, can come staggering up to the voting places---

I---I---

(HE strives to say more, but gives up in despair.)

I am deeply disillusioned!

(HE sits, disgusted and hopeless)

MAY

(the last to leave the table, speaking as the others linger reluctantly at the door.)

Mr. Blackwell--and ladies---I'm afraid we defenders of the negro must take a more realistic view of the matter than yours, You see---

(smiling unconvincingly)

Unfortunately, we are not the exponents of logic, but the slaves of practical politics

(smiling, HE starts out L., then turns)

Good day, ladies---and gentlemen!

(with a slight bow, HE follows SUMNER PHILLIPS, and GREELEY out L. I. E.)

ANTHONY

What a terrible---what a bitter disappointment!

HENRY

(rises, turns to LUCY, who, like the others sits in stumped silence. HE pats her shoulder sympathetically.)

Well, no help for it, I'm afraid.

GARRISON

(rising)

The situation seems pretty bad, but I'm going to make a last effort with Phillips.

(HE hurries out L. I. E.)

ANTHONY

(rising and crossing L., gathering up her cloak)

For thirty years we've worked with them, and they've put us aside as callously as that!

MRS. STANTON

I simply can't believe it, --that they should wash their hands of us in this brazen way! What are we going to do?  
(HENRY shakes his head sadly, but LUCY, more composed, speaks with an effort)

LUCY

There is only one thing to do. We'll have to start our work all over again. How I wish we had a newspaper of our own!

ANTHONY

Where could we get the money?

LUCY

I don't know.

(pulling herself together resolutely)

But somehow, I'm going to get enough to make a start, ten thousand at least.

HENRY

You mean you're going to start a woman suffrage newspaper?

LUCY

(firmly)

Yes, I mean it.

HENRY

Then I'll promise to give the first thousand.

LUCY

Oh, Harry!

MRS. STANTON

(SHE rises)

That's fine of you Mr. Blackwell. But I feel as if I'd never see the end now. We've worked for so long and here we are right where we started.

ANTHONY

We're worse off than when we started, now that the Fourteenth Amendment has put the word "male" into the Constitution for the first time.

MRS. STANTON

The way the word "male" is used in that amendment, I don't believe it applies to the right to vote.

ANTHONY

If that's so, I'm going to walk into a polling place at the next election and insist on voting, on the ground that the constitution does not exclude women, even if it doesn't mention them directly.

ANTOINETTE

I don't like to discourage you, Susan, but I don't believe that will do any good.

ANTHONY

(buttoning her cloak with determined gestures)

I can make a test case of it. You see if I don't.

HENRY

I'm afraid the officials will arrest you.

ANTHONY

(tying her bonnet strings into a tighter knot)

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^  
Alright! Let them! I'm going to try it anyway.  
(GARRISON enters L. I E. with a telegram)

GARRISON

No use. Phillips says he can't do anything.

HENRY

I was afraid he couldn't.

GARRISON

Here's a telegram for you, Lucy. It was forwarded in Susan's care.

LUCY

(handing it to HENRY)

Will you see what it is Harry?

(HARRY tears the envelope open, glances at the message, speaks excitedly)

HENRY

Why this is wonderful! Listen! "The legislature of the Territory of Wyoming, in it's first session, has voted to grant the right of suffrage to the women of Wyoming. It is an act of justice, and I sign the bill as gladly as Abraham Lincoln wrote his name on the Emancipation Proclamation. John W. Campbell, Governor.

LUCY

(breathlessly, exultantly)

At last! At last it has begun, Wyoming! The first place  
in the world to give women the vote.

(the lights fade out and the curtain  
falls. the MUSIC picks up the last  
movement of the BEETHOVEN FIFTH  
SYMPHONY.)

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