Judah (rising): Did you hear what happened today, mother? Hilon entered our garden, climbed up a date tree and began to pluck its fruit. I told him to go down. He refused. I began to pull him down by his feet. He kicked me and called me “cursed Jew.” That made me burn with anger. I pulled him down and nearly broke his legs.

Children: Hurrah! Hurrah!
Simon: Judah gave him a good beating.
Hannah: What happened then?
Judah: He began to weep and beg that I let him go.
All: Hurrah for Judah the Mighty!
Hannah: But don’t you think you’d better not fight with Hilon?
Judah: What business has he to enter our garden and pluck fruit, as if it belonged to him?
Hannah: But he is our neighbor’s son.
Joel: His father lives in Yedaiah’s house. People say that Hilon killed Yedaiah and took his land.
Elizer: Well, he is an officer in the Greek army, and he can do what he likes. And people say that he’ll kill more and more Jews.
Hannah: Nonsense, children. The Greeks will not kill the Jews.
Judah: I agree with you, mother. The Greeks will not kill us. I am going now, mother. I will return soon. (Goes off.)
Deborah (after a little silence): Mother, where is Mount Tabor, where Deborah the Prophetess fought Sisrah?
Hannah: Not far from the hills of Ephraim, daughter.
Jonathan: And where is Greece, also near Mount Tabor?
Hannah: No, precious. Greece is far, very far from here. It is not in the Land of Israel.
Jonathan: Then why are they here?
Hannah: They are wicked people. They want to take what is ours.
Joel: And they come to our gardens and plunder.
Simon: And they place idols in our cities and tell us to bow down to them.
Elizer: And their children tease us.
Simon: The Greeks are a terrible people.
Deborah: Terrible! Terrible was the story daddy told us last night, about Hannah and her seven sons. One by one, the poor children went to their death. Even the smallest held fast to God, rather than bow down to the idol.

Hannah: How much courage was in their hearts! How much love for their people and God!

Deborah: Jonathan wept so much and I too could not keep back my tears.

Joachim: Even father wept, as he told us the story.

Simon: Only Judah sat and listened silently.

Deborah: He looked as if he was dreaming.

Joachim: Father said that if the sons of Hannah had grown up they would have saved our people.

Hannah: There is no doubt about that. They would surely have driven the enemy out of our land. They would have gathered armies, great and mighty Jewish armies, and the Lord God of Israel would have helped them.

Deborah: Are there many Greeks in our land, mother?

Hannah: Many, many.

Deborah: Since when are they here? Were they also here in the days of Deborah and Barak?

Hannah: No, my dear. In those days there were no Greeks in our land. We always had our mighty men, our heroes who saved their people from the hand of the oppressors. We Jews love freedom, and we have always fought hard to get it and to keep it.

Joachim: But is not much Jewish blood shed in these wars?

Hannah: Surely, my son. But what is life without freedom, with an enemy in your land?

Deborah: King David was the mightiest hero, wasn't he, mother? He slew the lion and the bear and Goliath, didn't he, mother?

Hannah: Yes, precious. But where is Judah? I thought he was coming back soon.

Deborah: I want to tell you something, mother dear. Judah took a walk with me in the garden this morning, and he said that he heard that the Greeks are going to place an idol in our village. He got terribly angry and clenched his fist and said: "I hate the Greeks! I am going to fight them." Maybe he will become one of the great Jewish heroes. But the Greeks didn't place an idol yet, did they, mother?

Hannah: Not yet, my child. And what did you say to Judah?

Deborah: I said I would also fight with him.

Jonathan: And I too.

Eliezer: So will I.

Joachim: You may count on me also.

Simon: Me too.

Eliezer: They say that four soldiers guard the idol.

Deborah: But we are six, five sons and one daughter... I hear father is coming. I'll run to meet him.

(Judah enters)

Judah: Here, brothers. I gathered stones. Let's learn how to throw without missing. We'll show them how to place idols in our village. We'll break it to pieces. Come on, let's practice!

Simon: Father just came. I wonder what news he is bringing from the village.

Eliezer: We must learn to fight. It is the only way we can regain our freedom.

Joachim: Judah is right!

Judah: Here take these stones. Eliezer get that board. We'll imagine it's the idol! That's right. Come on! One, two, three!

(They practice.)

ACT 2.

Same scene. A few days later.

Mattathias (coming out of the house).

Hannah (follows him): Why are you so excited, Mattathias? And where are you going?

Mattathias: The people are aroused.

Hannah: There were only a few in the morning near the altar at the time of the riot! How can I keep our sons in check? They are planning in secret, gathering stones and making all kinds of preparations.

Mattathias: Are you afraid, my wife?

Hannah: Do you know, Deborah called me whether I am like Hannah who lost her seven sons.
Matthathias: No. You are like Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who dedicated her child to God's service. See, Hannah, the blood of the traitorous Jew is still upon my cloak. My hands! The hands of Matthathias the priest, shed blood!

Hannah: Woe! Woe! How will this thing end?

Matthathias: I have faith in the Lord, God of Israel. I am like Elijah who slew the false prophets.

Hannah: By this time it must be known to the Greek General and he is surely marching upon our village.

Matthathias: I do not fear the end. I know our people will win.

Hannah: Go! And may the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, send his help.

ACT 3.


First Soldier: Are we to stand here all night and watch the statue?

Second: It is the general's command.

Third: And for this we had to leave our land!

Second (jokingly): Isn't it a sacred duty to guard the statue of a God?

Fourth: You are all fools. The general's aim is not to keep watch over the statue, but to beat the Jews and to conquer their land.

First: Conquer? For whom?

Third: Not for me. We'll never conquer the Jews any way.

Fourth: And why do you complain? Is it too cold for you in this land?

First: Certainly. The nights are very cold. I am shivering all over.

Second: Well there is a remedy for that.

First: What is it? A woolen garment, or a feather quilt?

Second: Do you see these vineyards? Well, they are not ours yet, but they will be soon. There are treasures of the best wine hidden in them. Nothing can so warm you up like Jewish wine.

Third: Did you taste it?

Second: The very first day I came here I entered a wine-shop on Jerusalem Street. The Jew was very hospitable and told me he likes the Greeks, and wished there were more of us in this land.

Fourth: That's right. This Jew is a friend of our general. He visits him at night, for fear his fellow-Jews would kill him.

Third: What's his name?

First: Avigail.

Third: Why he's the man that was killed today by the priest.

Fourth: Why?

Third: Because he wanted to offer a sacrifice to our God.

Fourth: And what did the other Jews do?

Third: They shouted for joy.

Fourth: And you were not afraid to stand there?

Third: Well, I confess when they began to look too much at me, I retreated to the general's court yard.

Second (drawing out a bottle): Wine, brothers! Let's drink to the Jew's death!

(Treats the others)

First: It surely does warm you up. (To Third): Do you know, your story frightened me. Tell me, what did the priest who killed the Jew look like?

Third: Like one of our priests, and his courage was even greater than the courage of our men of valor.

First: Even rulers are awed by Jewish priests. Alexander the Great once fell off his steed when he saw one of their High Priests.

Fourth: Did you tell it to the general?

Third: I did. He said the Jews are preparing for war.

Second: Don't worry. Nothing will come of it. Let's drink, brothers!

All: No! This is too serious!

Second: What are you afraid of?

Third: How thick the darkness is. I see only one star, and it is red. . . .

First: It means blood. . . .

Second: It means wine. . . . Come let's drink and forget our troubles.

First: Perhaps they will start war tonight.

Second: You are fools! (Drinks one bottle after another.) I am
going for more wine. The dead Jew has lots of it. (Goes off drunk.)

*Fourth*: He goes away, that drunkard, and the general said that we should watch the statue.

*First*: He did well to go. The rebellious Jews will fall upon us.

*Third*: I was once a servant in the house of a Jew and I learned their language. I heard the father tell his sons how their patriarch, Abraham, even as a child, broke his father's idols.

*First*: If that's the case, I am going too. Let our general come and watch the statue. (Goes away.)

*Third*: I never had such a night. I was never so afraid in my life.

*Fourth*: You are right about the red star. It is terrible. And look at the thick clouds. I believe it will rain soon. Come, let's go into the tent. (They go away.)

(Judah followed by his brothers, all dressed in white appear.)

*Judah*: Simon and I are now coming from the assembly. The place is crowded with people. Many of them are afraid to start the fight. Father urges them to open war tomorrow. He demands that we drive all the Greeks out. How great and valiant he is! Like Moses! Like our Master Moses!

*Simon*: Look, we are at the idol. But where are the guards?

*Eliezer*: They went to sleep, like last night.

*Judah*: Come, brothers! Let's stone it!

(They throw stones at the statue.)

*Judah*: No one hears! No one sees! Come, let's shatter it to pieces.

*All* (shouting): Abomination! Idols! Shatter! Turn it into powder!

(Matthathias appears followed by other men.)

*All*: Father! Father! We destroyed the idol!

(Hannah and Deborah come out.)

*Mattathias*: My sons! My heroes! (Hannah embraces Judah.)

*Mattathias*: You have done a great thing. You have started the rebellion! You are going to lead the people in their struggle for freedom. (Kisses them.)

*Judah*: We shall fight for our people, for our land, for our God.

*Mattathias*: The God of Israel liveth!

*All*: The God of Israel liveth!

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School News

*Just Around the Corner*

It takes more than rain to keep any children in Class-I away from Sunday School. Nothing but serious illness has prevented a perfect attendance every Sunday. We have been talking about the blessings sent to us from God. Stop in our room and see what things we are very thankful for. You will see that only thankful children could have made pictures which so closely resemble those He made.

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We're having a fine time in the 3rd grade this year. You see we're reading and studying the book Genesis, and the other Sunday we gave "Noah and the Ark" in assembly. You should have seen our costumes—they did not have a stitch in them—why? Because they were only big cardboard signs with the name of the character that we represented printed on them, but no one minded because we are training our imagination. We all closed our eyes and saw Noah with a long white beard and a flowing gown. We completely forgot that our Noah was Allan Lanard.

You see we are the oldest class in our assembly, and so we feel rather important. Every week one of us prepares a short closing prayer to conclude assembly. We are proud of that privilege, and we would not give it up for anything. Do you know what else we do? We color Bible story pictures on the Book of Genesis at home every week, and bring them in to be marked. In fact, we are having a contest in this work, and we are competing with all our strength, 'cause we all want to win the prizes.

So you see we enjoy our work, and it seems like play, yet we get a good deal done. Come see us sometime.