

YELLOW ROSE

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A musical in two acts

Music and lyrics by Paul Vincent Gandolfi and Terry Allen Langfitt  
Book and additional lyrics by Sarah Lawrence

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

EMILY WEST, 20, female, biracial Black/White, formerly enslaved

SANTA ANNA, 41, male, Hispanic (Mexican-born, Spanish descent),  
President of Mexico and leader of the Mexican army

LEVI GATES, 28, Black, male, dock foreman, walks with a limp

JAMES MORGAN, 48, White, male, visionary Texian colonist

CELIA MORGAN, 35, White, wife of James, savvy & practical

JOSÉ TORNEL, 40, male, Hispanic, Santa Anna's aide-de-camp &  
publicist

MAJOR GEORGE HOCKLEY, 33, White, arrogant officer in Texian  
army

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN, 58, White, fiery Abolitionist preacher

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON, 28, Black, formerly enslaved, gifted  
orator and preacher

DOÑA MARIA DE SAN CRISTOBAL, 70, female, Hispanic, head of a  
proud Spanish family, original Mexican settlers

ENSEMBLE ROLES: (some doubling using characters above)

**Yellow Rose Song List © 2023**

Songs & Lyrics by Paul Gandolfi & Terry Langfitt

Additional Lyrics by Sarah Lawrence

**Act I**

1. Song of Freedom
2. Anywhere But Here
3. The Warrior In Me
4. Everything's Better In Texas
5. Something, Someone
6. Everything I Want In a Woman
7. Jarocho Fandango Instrumental
8. Thrive
9. Guide My Feet On My Journey
10. The Heart of Texas
11. Serenade
12. What If I Stay?
13. Emily
14. The Warrior In Me Reprise
15. This Is the Time
16. Tomorrow's the Day

**Act II**

17. Remember!
18. She Don't Belong Around Here
19. Tango del Diablo
20. Tell Him/Her How You Feel
21. Fearless
22. Yellow Rose Finale

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

The story takes place before and during the Texas War of Independence in 1835-1836. Each scene should easily transition to indicate location: the Dixwell Church in Connecticut, the New Washington Settlement in east Tejas, the President's Palace in Mexico City, the Goliad battlefield, and a jail cell in San Antonio.

ACT I

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT. DIXWELL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 1835.

AT RISE: A worship service at the first Black congregation in Connecticut. EMILY WEST plays a spirited gospel hymn on an old piano. Two ministers enter: fiery White abolitionist SIMEON JOCELYN and Black REVEREND DR. JAMES PENNINGTON. The BLACK CHOIR files in, including LEVI GATES. Emily leads the choir from the piano.

CHOIR AND EMILY

"SONG OF FREEDOM"

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY  
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

CHOIR

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY  
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
Amen!  
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

ALLELU

REV. JAMES PENNINGTON

Hear these words, brothers and sisters, from our beloved Paul's letter to the Galatians: "Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."

CHOIR (CONT'D)

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
ALLELU  
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY  
ALLELU  
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
ALLELU

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

I will not rest until we see the evils of slavery vanquished in our land. From the injustice I see on these streets of Connecticut to the bondage of every plantation across the South.

CHOIR (CONT'D)

SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

REV. JAMES PENNINGTON

Heed the truth, brothers and sisters. None of us can be free until all of us are free.

EMILY WEST

I HEAR THE SONG THEY'RE SINGING  
BUT AM I REALLY FREE?  
DRAPED IN THE SKIN OF DIFFERENCE  
IS THERE A LIFE FOR ME?

I KNOW I SHOULD BE HAPPY  
BUT I JUST WANT TO LEAVE  
I'M CRIPPLED BY THIS FEELING  
WHEN I KNOW I SHOULD BELIEVE

CHOIR AND EMILY  
THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY ALLELU  
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM ALLELU  
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. SAME TIME.

PRESIDENT SANTA ANNA presides over  
a meeting with JOSÉ TORNEL and the  
MEXICAN CARDINAL. A GROUP OF  
MEXICANS stand outside with signs.

SANTA ANNA  
I CAN'T IGNORE MY PEOPLE  
I MUST RESTORE THE LAW  
Twenty presidents in twenty years!

JOSÉ TORNEL  
AND YOU'LL BE GREATER THAN THEM ALL

SANTA ANNA  
THERE'LL BE NO MORE GUNS AND NO MILITIAS  
WE SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE POPE  
NO MORE IMMIGRANTS AND NO SLAVERY  
THIS WILL GIVE MY PEOPLE HOPE

TORNEL & CARDINAL  
ALLELUIA ALLELUIA

CARDINAL  
Listen to the people, Presidente.

TORNEL  
They shout your name in the streets.

CARDINAL  
They want law and order!

CROWD  
Viva Mexico! Viva Mexico!

TORNEL  
Long live Santa Anna!

MEXICAN ENSEMBLE  
THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM EL PRESIDENTE  
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY ALLELUIA

MEXICAN ENSEMBLE SANTA ANNA  
TORNEL CARDINAL  
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM ALLELUIA  
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

NEW WASHINGTON SETTLEMENT, GALVESTON BAY, SAME TIME.

MUSIC CONTINUES as JAMES MORGAN  
fronts a group of TEXIAN SETTLERS.  
CELIA MORGAN hands him Santa  
Anna's Presidential Decree.

JAMES MORGAN  
No more slavery! Santa Anna's abolished slavery  
across all of Mexico. All of Texas!

CELIA MORGAN  
Praise the Lord, an enlightened man.

JAMES MORGAN  
This is what we've dreamed of, Celia. A government  
guarantee, everyone in Mexico can now live free.  
IMAGINE A WORLD  
WHERE THE TRUTH IS UNBRIDLED  
AND PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE  
THAT THEY'RE BORN TO BE  
WHERE DREAMS ARE UNFETTERED  
UNFILTERED UNSTIFLED  
AND WE MAKE THE HISTORY OF WE

TEXIAN #1  
We're with you, Captain!

JAMES MORGAN  
I LIVE FOR THE CHANCE  
TO BE PART OF THE TALE  
THAT'S TOLD OVER AND OVER AGAIN

TEXIAN #2  
Count me in!

JAMES MORGAN  
THE SPARK FOR THE FIRE  
THE WIND FOR THE SAIL  
THAT TAKES US WHERE WE'VE NEVER BEEN

THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY

WHITE ENSEMBLE  
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

ALL  
THIS IS OUR SONG OF FREEDOM  
WE CHOOSE OUR DESTINY ALLELU  
COME JOIN OUR SONG OF FREEDOM ALLELU  
SING OUT FOR YOU AND ME

MUSIC FADES. Cast exits.

DIXWELL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, FOLLOWING.

After the worship service, Emily,  
Levi and two Black Women hang  
back. Levi walks with a limp,  
aided by a cane.

LEVI GATES  
Miss Emily, you sure did play sweetly this morning.

BLACK WOMAN #1  
Oh, Miz Emily, you sure did play sweetly this  
morning.

BLACK WOMAN #2  
Levi Gates, that gal don't belong around here.

BLACK WOMAN #1  
Best stick to your own kind.

LEVI GATES  
(holds Emily back)  
My, my ladies. You may be dressed all church-like,  
but you need a heart to match. Pay no mind, Emily.

BLACK WOMAN #1  
Levi, wake up! This little gal's nothing but  
trouble.

LEVI GATES  
May the Good Lord heap blessings on your day,  
ladies.

EMILY WEST  
And on your heads!

BLACK WOMAN #2  
Don't say we didn't warn you!

The Two Women exit in a huff.

EMILY WEST  
That's what everyone around here thinks.

LEVI GATES  
Not everyone.



EMILY WEST

Levi, the answer's still no. I will not marry you.

LEVI GATES

Emily, I'm dock foreman now. Pay's good. New Haven's a great place to raise a family.

(taps cane)

Is it this?

EMILY WEST

Of course not. I just need to sort some things out. For myself.

LEVI GATES

When you're done "sorting things out," you let me know.

EMILY WEST

You have no idea what I've been through.

LEVI GATES

There's not a soul in this congregation hasn't been through hell. Some worse than you. Isn't it time you got over your past and start living into your future?

EMILY WEST

Don't you start with me! Don't you start.

LEVI GATES

The rest of us are heading down to the docks. Sunday picnic! You coming?

EMILY WEST

I'll be along in a bit. You go on.

Levi limps off, head held high.  
Emily walks to the piano, plinks a few notes of "Song of Freedom."

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)

Freedom.

(plunks a few more notes, then steps away)

Lord, I can't shut my eyes, can't find any peace.

"ANYWHERE BUT HERE"

LORD I WANT TO RUN AWAY  
FROM MYSELF, FROM MY PAST  
FROM THESE NIGHTMARES EVERY DAY  
I DON'T FIT IN ANYWAY

I'M TOO DARK, I'M TOO LIGHT  
I'M TOO DIFFERENT SO THEY SAY

I KNOW THAT MOVING FORWARD  
 WILL HELP ME TO FORGET  
 IT'S TIME I BREAK MY  
 CHAINS OF SORRY AND REGRET AND BE

ANYWHERE BUT HERE  
 I WANT A NEW BEGINNING  
 I WANT TO DISAPPEAR AND BE  
 ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I'VE STAYED MUCH TOO LONG  
 IT'S TIME THAT I MOVE ON  
 TO ANYWHERE, ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I NEED TO FIND MY WAY  
 TO FREEDOM, TO BELONGING  
 TO A PLACE I WANT TO STAY  
 (AND) I NEED TO HAVE A SAY  
 ABOUT MY FUTURE, MY PATHWAY  
 AND THE CHOICES I CAN MAKE

I'LL HAVE A BETTER LIFE  
 THAN THE ONE THAT I'VE BEEN SHOWN  
 I'LL LEAVE THIS PLACE BEHIND  
 AND FIND ONE OF MY OWN  
 ANYWHERE BUT HERE

I WANT A NEW BEGINNING  
 I WANT TO DISAPPEAR AND BE  
 ANYWHERE BUT HERE  
 I'VE STAYED HERE MUCH TOO LONG

IT'S TIME THAT I MOVE ON  
 TO ANYWHERE, ANYWHERE BUT HERE  
 I WANT A NEW BEGINNING  
 I WANT TO DISAPPEAR AND BE  
 ANYWHERE BUT HERE  
 I'VE STAYED MUCH TOO LONG  
 IT'S TIME THAT I MOVE ON  
 TO ANYWHERE, ANYWHERE BUT HERE

She falls to her knees, prays  
 silently. Jocelyn and Pennington  
 enter, not seeing her.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

I feel good about leaving the church in your hands,  
 James. It's long past time we found a Negro pastor  
 to lead this congregation.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

You have big boots to fill, Sir. I'm humbled by  
 your faith in me.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

There's just one thing left undone. I wouldn't feel right about leaving until I see you settled down.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

Marriage?

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

It's unseemly for a bachelor to lead a congregation.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

I'm perfectly capable--

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

Hear me out. Emily West is the most gifted young woman to ever come through our school. She excels in math, literature, and her voice! Like an angel. She would be a real asset to your ministry.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

She's obviously a gifted musician. But haven't you raised her to be a bit too presumptuous?

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

She does speak her mind. She's young. With the proper molding, I'm sure she'll grow out of it.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

Simeon, I'll be frank. Her parentage. Her father, a plantation owner, her mother a slave.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

There's no shame in that! You were born a slave.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

I've spent ten years of my life trying to convince people I'm not a freak of nature. A person of color who can actually think, and speak of God, no less? Now you want to saddle me with a high yellow girl. Whatever she does, all the credit will go to her father. Her white father.

EMILY WEST

(springs up from behind the piano)

How dare you! Judge not, lest ye be judged!

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

She does know her Bible!

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

Show some respect for Dr. Pennington.

EMILY WEST

He doesn't show any respect for me.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

You see?

EMILY WEST

(to Pennington)

Seems my skin is too light to suit your purpose,  
(to Jocelyn)  
and too dark to suit yours.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

I apologize, James. Youthful folly! She'll grow out of it.

REV. DR. JAMES PENNINGTON

Let's hope it's sooner rather than later.

REV. SIMEON JOCELYN

Emily, I raised you with better manners than that!  
It is our Christian duty to cherish and respect all of God's children.

EMILY WEST

With all due respect.

(sardonic curtsey)

Gentlemen!

PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, MEXICO CITY, SAME TIME.

Faint "Song of Freedom" comes through the window. Tornel paces. Santa Anna sits at his desk.

JOSÉ TORNEL

They continue to march, Presidente.

SANTA ANNA

What do my people demand now?

JOSÉ TORNEL

They carry signs.

(looks out window)

"Law and order." "Peace now."

SANTA ANNA

What could they possibly know of peace?

(shuffles papers, stamps a few)

Or me, the president of a great nation, burdened with this idiotic paperwork?

JOSÉ TORNEL

Doña Maria continues to wait outside. She grows impatient.

SANTA ANNA

Show her in. And then in five minutes, interrupt us and show her out.

Tornel bows, walks to the door and opens it.

JOSÉ TORNEL

Doña Maria, head of the venerated San Cristóbal family.

Doña Maria enters. Awkward pause.

JOSÉ TORNEL (CONT'D)  
(loud whisper)

Protocol!

DOÑA MARIA

I do not bow to this one. I knew him when he was a snivel-nosed boy with nasty habits. Clearly, time has taught him nothing.

Tornel bows and exits.

SANTA ANNA

Felicitations, Doña Maria.

DOÑA MARIA

Felicitations? You killed my husband.

SANTA ANNA

I kill many husbands. Some women are grateful.

DOÑA MARIA

Perhaps you forget who put you in power. The family is reconsidering their support. We fear your ambition outstrips your intellect. One bloody battle after another. The bloodshed must stop.

SANTA ANNA

I will not stop until Mexico becomes the most powerful nation on earth. The people demand nothing less. The problem with you and your family is that you lack vision.

DOÑA MARIA

Vision? This is my vision. For you. For your children. On the graves of all my holy ancestors, I curse you, Santa Anna. I curse you! You will become the most hated man in all of Mexico.

SANTA ANNA

Get out of my sight.

DOÑA MARIA

You will live to see the day when people spit on you in the streets. You will die in poverty, in squalor. Your descendants will roam the earth like ghosts. Your legacy will be nothing but shame.

SANTA ANNA

Get out! Witch!

He heaves the bronze bust from his desk at her as she exits. Tornel scurries in. Santa Anna returns to his chair, picks up a pen, examines documents.

JOSÉ TORNEL

Presidente, you look pale. What did she want this time?

SANTA ANNA

It is of no consequence. But the good woman needs a vacation. Yes! Put her and her entire litter on a boat to Spain. Before nightfall.

(throws pen at desk, rises)

"THE WARRIOR IN ME"

THESE POLITICS BORE ME  
RIGHT DOWN TO MY CORE  
I'M A MAN OF ADVENTURE  
A DISCIPLE OF WAR

IT'S A SWORD THAT I WIELD  
NOT THIS PEN IN MY HAND  
I LEAD ON THE FIELD  
I LIVE TO COMMAND

I NEED SOME ADVENTURE  
A FORWARD CAMPAIGN  
IF I SIGN ONE MORE PARCHMENT  
I MIGHT GO INSANE

IF I STAY HERE MUCH LONGER  
I JUST MIGHT EXPLODE  
I NEED SOME EXCITEMENT  
TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD

CAN'T YOU SEE?  
THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME  
THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME  
THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME  
I AM A WARRIOR

THIS THIS THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME  
YES THIS IS THE WARRIOR IN ME

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT. THE DOCKS, TWO WEEKS LATER.

WHITE ENSEMBLE enters: Morgan's tipsy sailing crew and women they've picked up on the docks. BLACK ENSEMBLE strolls in from the other side, wearing Sunday best.