

The Borrowed Book

Narrator	Abraham's step-mother
Abraham Lincoln	Mr. Josiah Crawford
Abraham's father	Mrs. Josiah Crawford

Narrator: Abraham Lincoln's mother died when he was nine and when he was ten his father married his step-mother, Sally Lincoln. We know he was over ten when this event happened, but we are not sure exactly how old he was. This scene takes place early one fall morning at the Lincoln cabin in southern Indiana.

Mr. Lincoln: Abraham, we have a lot of work to do today.

Abraham: Father, Mr. Crawford let me borrow a book. It's called *The Life of Washington*. I am very excited to get to read it. Do you think we can stop work early today, so I can have time to read it?

Mr. Lincoln: Abraham, there is a lot of work to do on the farm. We have to work while the sun is up. We cannot take off early so you can read.

Abraham: Father, this book is about President Washington. He was a great man. He was our nation's first president. He was very honest and brave.

Mr. Lincoln: Well, I'm glad you know so much about Washington. I'm sure you know all a farmer needs to know. We have a lot of work to do to live on this farm. When we moved here from Kentucky it was nothing but a forest. Now we have a very good life here. Our land gives us everything we need. We would not have what we have if we sat around and read books all day.

Abraham: Father, there is so much that has been learned by great leaders who have lived before. When we read in books we can know what they learned. We don't have to start at the beginning. I want to learn everything that is in books.

Mr. Lincoln: Son, all you need to know is that the earth will give us food if we work hard. If we don't work hard we will go hungry.

Mrs. Lincoln: Abraham, I am happy that you have the book. I will be sure the fire is bright tonight so you can read by the fire light. I am so proud of you for being such a good reader.

Mr. Lincoln: And waste good firewood?

Mrs. Lincoln: You know Abraham chopped that wood all by himself. He can fill the wood box up again!

Mr. Lincoln: Mother, you know the boy needs his rest so he can work. When we get the work done here at our farm I will hire him out to neighbor farmers. There is always something to do.

Mrs. Lincoln: The school teacher said he is a very good reader. Even though he has not been able to go to school very much at all, Abraham is very smart.

Mr. Lincoln: Come on Abraham, let's get to work. Work hard today and I will allow you to read tonight if you don't stay up too late.

Abraham: Thank you Father. Thank you Mother. I will not disappoint you.

Narrator: That night Abraham did get to read by the light of the fire. When he went to sleep, he placed the borrowed book in a space between the logs of the log cabin where there is "chinking" which is made of mud and sticks. It keeps rain from coming in between the logs. However, that night there was a crack in the chinking and the rain came in. The book was soaked. Scene two is the next morning.

Mr. Lincoln: Abraham, wake up. It's time to get up and get working. It rained last night and the fields will be wet. Harvesting will be hard today.

Abraham: Oh No! The book!

Mr. Lincoln: Son, we have no time for books today. We must get to work.

Abraham: But the book is ruined. I laid it between the logs in the cabin wall. The chinking leaked and the book got soaked.

Mr. Lincoln: Didn't I tell you there is always work to do. We have to fix the chinking now.

Mrs. Lincoln: Oh what a shame. Mr. Crawford will be very disappointed. He brought that book when he moved here from Virginia. There is no way we can replace it.

Abraham: I will go see Mr. Crawford and ask him how I can make it up to him. Father, I'll get to work as soon as I can. Right now I must go see Mr. Crawford.

Narrator: Scene Three - at the Crawford's house.

Mrs. Crawford: Abraham, how good to see you.

Abraham: Yes ma'am. Is Mr. Crawford here? I need to talk to him.

Mrs. Crawford: You look awful plagued, Abraham. What has happened?

Mr. Crawford: Abraham, what happened? I've never seen you so sorrowful.

Abraham: The book, sir. It got ruined. There was a crack in the chinking where I set the book in the log cabin wall. Now it's ruined. I have no money. How can I repay you?

Mr. Crawford: Well, I have a pretty big field of corn. I need some help pulling fodder. The corn has been harvested, but the tops of the stalks need to be cut off and tied up to save for animal feed this winter. It should take a couple of days. Are you willing to do that work?

Abraham: Why yes sir, I will gladly pull your fodder. I'm sure my father won't like to let me go, but he would not want me to owe you for that book.

Mr. Crawford: You pa has raised you to work hard and to be honest.

Abraham: Yes sir. When I do good, I feel good, and when I do bad, I feel bad. I would not feel good if I didn't pay for the book.

Mr. Crawford: Well, then it's only fair. You can keep the book.

Abraham: Really? That will be my first book. My mother owns a Bible and an Aesop's Fable book, but this will be the first book I own myself. Thank you so much, sir.

Mrs. Crawford: Abraham, you are a smart, honest, and mighty good boy.

Mr. Crawford: Abraham, you come by here any time. You can read and study here at our house. We can let you sit in that corner right there and read and do arithmetic.

Mr. Crawford: We don't have any slate, but we can shave a board and you can write on it with red keel. When the board is filled up, you can shave it off and you can write on it again.

Abraham: Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Crawford. You are kind. I will come here whenever I can get away from the work.

Mrs. Crawford: Abe, you're a good boy. I wonder what will become of you.

Abraham: Why Ma'am, I intend to be president someday just like George Washington.

Mr. Crawford: And well you may, Abraham. Well you may.