



Lynch Victim's Step-Father
James "Jack" Brown

Character Sketch of James "Jack" Brown

James "Jack" Brown was the third husband of Sarah Akers Scott Clemens Brown, James Scott's Mother. In the feature, James has been given the name "Jack" in order to preserve the name "James" for the lead player, James Scott.

Sarah met and married Jack Brown upon her return to Columbia, Missouri from Chicago after she had raised her two sons James and Akers. It's unknown when Jack and Sarah were married, but they did remain together for the rest of Sarah's life, until she died in 1940 after being badly burned in a house fire.

In the feature, Jack is imagined as a kind and gentle step-father, retired and happy to share in Sarah's Life with her children and grand-children. Jack may or may not have been that type of man, but he very likely was a member of Columbia's racially segregated working class of black men, serving the white community through some sort of labor in order to provide a home for his new wife. In that circumstance, he probably had a deep appreciation for his step-son, James' quest to also work hard in order to provide for his family.

Jack is perhaps less emotionally affected, but equally horrified on the night when Gertrude pounds on his door to tell him and Sarah that her son James has been lynched. The scene showing the three of them in the living room, collapsed in grief is heartbreaking.



Summary Justice Partners, llc

SIDES

James and Gertrude settle onto the sofa. SARAH plays with the children on the floor. JACK carries the conversation from his chair.

JACK

So, Gertrude, how's the job at Douglass? The children behaving themselves?

GERTRUDE

It's wonderful, Mr. Brown. The children are little angels. First and second grade—they're still at that age.

SARAH

Your work is so important. And you, James? Everything going well at the university?

JAMES

They treat me fair. Different from driving somebody around all day. I'm at the medical school now, keeping things maintained. Mostly inside work, which was nice last winter.

JACK

Mmm, I imagine so.

Jack reaches into a nearby end table drawer and withdraws a wrapped box. He extends it toward James.

JACK

Your Mamma and I have something for you, son.

James unwraps the box. He and Gertrude stare at the framed photograph inside. Their faces transform—huge smiles bloom.

JAMES

Jack, Momma! It's wonderful.

The photograph shows James leading a parade, flanked by two other men.

SIDES

SARAH

I used to do housework for a newspaper photographer. When I saw him at the Emancipation Day Parade last summer, I asked him to take it for me. Jack and I thought it might look nice on your wall.

JAMES

Thank you! Thank you so much! It's beautiful.

Carl tugs on his father's sleeve.

CARL Dad, dad. Can we go feed Doug and Clyde?

JACK

Doug and Clyde? Gert! You been holding something back?!

GERTRUDE

No! Doug and Clyde are two dogs at James' work. He takes care of them.

JAMES

Somebody's gotta show 'em some love while they're still living.

Helen absorbs the weight of his words. She understands.