

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: VAMPIRE HUNTER

screenplay by
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Based on his novel

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FACTS:

1. For over 250 years, between 1607 and 1865, vampires thrived in the shadows of America. Few humans knew they existed.
2. Abraham Lincoln was one of the gifted vampire hunters of his day, and kept a secret journal about his war against them.
3. Rumors of the journal's existence have long been a favorite topic among historians and Lincoln biographers.

Most dismiss it as myth...

BLACK.

CROWD (V.O.)
Lincoln! Lincoln!

INT. WHITE HOUSE (EXECUTIVE OFFICE) - 1865 - NIGHT

TITLE: **APRIL 14, 1865**

A LARGE CROWD

has gathered on the North Lawn of the White House, CHANTING below a second-floor balcony -- demanding a glimpse of their President.

CROWD
Lincoln! Lincoln!

We PULL BACK TO REVEAL that we've been looking through a window. FURTHER BACK -- all the details of the President's office coming into view.

BACK until we see the iconic ABRAHAM LINCOLN (56) sitting at his desk; writing in a small leather-bound journal by candlelight.

Finished, he puts down his pen, stands and straightens his coat -- leaving the journal open on his desk.

CLOSER to the open page as he walks away; closer to the words in tight loops of black ink, as we hear their AUTHOR'S VOICE:

ABE (V.O.)
History prefers legends to men...

CUT TO:

INT. A LOUISVILLE PUB - 1829 - NIGHT

TITLE: **LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY -- 36 YEARS EARLIER**

Filled with HAPPY DRUNKS at this late hour -- some playing cards; some SINGING. A LONE CUSTOMER sits at the bar -- the only man not taking part in the merriment. Two items in front of him: a glass of whisky, and a small, leather-bound journal -- the same one we just saw, but less-worn.

ABE (V.O.)
*It prefers nobility to brutality;
soaring speeches to quiet deeds...*

We see his broad back -- his large hand as it grabs the glass for one last shot.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*History remembers the battle...and
 forgets the blood.*

He opens the journal to its first page; to a slightly faded inscription:

*"We merely pass to dust,
 but our words and deeds live forever..."*

CUSTOMER (O.S.)
 (finishes his drink, then)
 Happy birthday, Mama...

CLOSER to those words as we --

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE JRB SHIPPING COMPANY - NIGHT

The dark waters of the Ohio River LAP the wood piers of this moonlit waterfront. Mist snakes up through the floorboards.

ABE (V.O.)
*Whatever history remembers of me, if
 it remembers anything at all, it shall
 be only a fraction of the truth...*

A MAN IN SHADOW

tall and cloaked, his eyes firmly fixed on --

JACK BARTS

An almost comically-short, portly man (40's) who scans the night as he steps out of his office, fumbling with a set of KEYS in an attempt to lock his office door.

This is especially difficult because he's *missing his right arm just below the elbow* -- his sleeve neatly pinned.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*For whatever else I am: a husband; a
 lawyer; a President...*

He groans in effort until -- CLICK -- it locks.

ANOTHER CLICK. But this one Barts can't account for...

He SPINS -- abnormally fast -- and takes in his shadowy onlooker. Sizing him up; bracing himself.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*I shall always think of myself, first
 and foremost, as an assassin.*

The figure's arm WHIPS UP, and a PISTOL FIRES sharply -- dark mist electrified in muzzle flash as we watch --

THE SLOW MOTION BULLET

escape the flaming barrel's end. The bullet spins through the air until it *sticks in Barts's left eye -- the back of a bullet where his pupil used to be!*

As he blinks, feeling his new *metal eyeball* --

BARTS
 MY EYE! YOU'VE TAKEN MY EYE!

Reloading hurriedly, the assailant's quaking fingers betray some fear at Barts's fury: *Why isn't he dead?*

BARTS (CONT'D)
*You...you're Thomas Lincoln's boy...
 (fangs out)
 I'll tear out your heart!*

And Barts LEAPS -- far beyond what an ordinary man should be able. TIME SLOWS as his flight halts on the end of a --

RELOADED PISTOL. We see the SLO-MO distress in Barts's good eye as the barrel enters his howling mouth mid-flight and --

FIRES -- a gaping exit wound SPLATTERS out of the back of his head, and Barts falls like a heap of broken sticks. Blood fountaining from his twin head wounds.

Trembling, the murderer steps from the shadows, revealing --

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

No characteristic beard in these early years (20), in fact his face is almost boyish, save for the deep horror splashed across it -- *I've just killed a man.*

SMASH TO:

TITLE: **ABRAHAM LINCOLN: VAMPIRE HUNTER**

BACK TO:

Abe looks down at the gun in his hand; tosses it down the pier. It CLATTERS into the water as he turns -- stepping into the night, until --

A SHUFFLING behind him. Abe freezes; slowly turns.

Jack Barts is *rising to his feet*...

BARTS (CONT'D)
You dare attack me...

Only Jack Barts is gone. He's been replaced by something else. A demon -- *a one-eyed, one-armed demon*.

ON ABE: Confused and terrified by what he sees, until he remembers -- *Shit! The gun!* Abe makes his move toward the pier --

But Barts cuts him off -- his clawed fingers gripping the back of Abe's head and BASHING it into the planks.

Ribbons of blood pour from Abe's face. Barts snarls and drags a finger through them...tastes the blood.

BARTS (CONT'D)
Your heart must be racing...
(beat)
We'll put an end to that.

Barts plunges Abe's head below the water.

FROM ABE'S POV

THRASHING as he drowns...until a strange calm washes over him...

He watches the trails of his blood dance through the water...watches the boney, white fingers as they grip him in vicious glee. *It'll all be over soon*. But --

BARTS VANISHES in a blurry instant! Abe's head remains beneath the surface, too weak to move, until a hand (the hand of God?) pulls him up and TOSSES HIM on the pier.

ABE'S SIDEWAYS POV

as an epic fight plays out in the shadowy mist.

The waterfront SHAKES; WOOD SPLINTERS in the dark.

Abe watches Barts LEAP -- *incredibly* -- onto a distant rooftop. Still GASPING for breath, he sees his opportunity to escape and takes it: struggling to his feet and running...

Losing consciousness with every step...

Abe begins to pass out -- THE WORLD TILTING ON ITS AXIS as he falls forward and --

MATCH TO:

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

TITLE: **9 YEARS EARLIER**

A FLASHBACK BEGINS as Abe --

-- SMACKS! -- headlong into dead leaves. ABRAHAM LINCOLN (11) picks himself up and keeps on running.

ABE (V.O.)
*Indiana was the wild frontier in those
 days. Some settlers called it "the
 dark country..."*

Young Abe and his friends -- WILL (African-American), SAMUEL, and JACOB -- run as the last daylight fades to darkness. The trees around them seem strangely sinister; painting-like.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Like all frontier children, I'd grown
 up hearing the strange noises that
 seemed to greet each sunset...*
 (beat)
I'd grown up afraid...

They reach the edge of an especially dense, dark bit of woods peppered with faded stone markers -- *a burial ground*. The other boys continue, but Abe stops dead.

YOUNG ABRAHAM
 (scared)
 Maybe we should take the long way
 around...

As if in answer, a DISTANT SHRIEK echoes through the trees.
Fuck it. As he continues briskly into the graves...

WILL

C'mon!

As Abe hits his stride, he sees something *emerge from the darkness ahead* --

THE SHAPE OF A MAN

running in the opposite direction, no more than twenty yards to their right. Running in fear. *Running for his life.*

ABE (V.O.)

At first, I thought it was only my imagination...a deer, made to look human by a trick of the light...

Abe's eyes are drawn skyward by the shape of --

ANOTHER MAN

jumping across the treetops above. Soaring fifty yards at a time -- chasing the terrified adult. Impossible...

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But this was no trick...

His eyes locked on the treetops, Abe doesn't see a gnarled thicket of Briar Bush in his path. He YELPS as he --

Crashes into it! His panicked CRIES growing the more he struggles -- thorns tearing his clothes; binding him tighter.

YOUNG ABRAHAM

HELP! HELP ME!

Samuel and Jacob race ahead, but --

WILL

stops; turns back. Pulling a small knife, he races to Abe's side and HACKS at the briars, freeing his friend.

But once he's freed, Abe just stands there -- dumbfounded -- watching that shape leap from branch-to-branch, until Will yanks him by his shirtcollar.

WILL

RUN, stupid!

And that's *exactly* what they do.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LINCOLN CABIN - LATER

Nancy hurries to Abe as he finally emerges from the trees.

NANCY
Abraham Lincoln!
(grabs his face)
You know full well you're to be home
before dark!

YOUNG ABRAHAM
I'm sorry mama, I --

NANCY
Don't you scare me like that again!

She drags him away, SCOLDING him as a GUST moves through the trees, RATTLING their bare branches like skeletal fingers.

Abe looks back over his shoulder toward the woods as a distant sound -- almost a SCREAM -- rings out...

ABE (V.O.)
*I dare not tell her what I'd seen,
lest she worry even more than she
already did...*

EXT. THE BARTS FARM - DAY

RAIN beats down on the main house, barn and other outbuildings. Nancy is dry under the house's covered porch, sweeping water down its steps. Her son and husband, however, aren't as lucky.

Abe stands at the foot of a ladder, a coat held over his head in a futile attempt to stay dry, as Thomas HAMMERS away at the barn's leaky roof above.

YOUNG ABRAHAM
Father?

THOMAS
(eyes on his work)
Hmmm...

YOUNG ABRAHAM
You think there's such a thing
as...vampires?

Thomas pauses, then resumes HAMMERING.

YOUNG ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
Jacob Grigsby says there is. He said
they've got teeth like knives.

THOMAS
That's enough, Abraham.

YOUNG ABRAHAM
He says his pa saw one up clo --

THOMAS
I said ENOUGH!

Thomas looks down from his perch.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I don't want to hear another word on
it, understood?

YOUNG ABRAHAM
Yessir.

THOMAS
Now fetch me the saw.

Abe does as he's told -- carrying the saw up the ladder and
exchanging it for the hammer. But as he climbs down --

FARMHAND (O.S.)
(distant)
Clumsy sonofabitch!

The voice draws Abe's eyes to a commotion on the porch of the
main house -- some 40 yards from where he stands.

WILL

hurriedly cleans off a WHITE FARMHAND'S shirt after bumping
into him with a basket of eggs -- yolk everywhere.

FARMHAND (CONT'D)
Look what you did!

WILL
I didn't mean --

The farmhand grabs Will, shoves him against the side of the house, takes off his belt and WHIPS him across the back.

His SCREAM makes Abe wince, and Thomas stop his work.

Will's face contorts in agony as the belt tears through his shirt a second time -- into the flesh of his back.

YOUNG ABRAHAM
(begins to yell "Will")
WI --

THOMAS
QUIET!!

Thomas glares down, sternly.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Look away, Abraham. It's not our place
to interfere.

As if reinforcing this, Abe sees --

OTHER WORKERS

some black, others white, do the same. They look away -- eyes on their work as Will is beaten. *It's not our place...*

For a moment, Abe does what he's told. He looks away as --

Will collapses and crawls across the porch; down the stairs -- but the farmhand doesn't let up.

WILL
(through tears)
PLEEEASE!

Abe looks down at the hammer in his hand, fist clenched...

Fuck it. He takes off running toward the main house.

ABE (V.O.)
*I hadn't the slightest idea what I was
doing...*

THOMAS
ABRAHAM!

Abe cuts through the downpour -- raises his left hand...

ABE (V.O.)
*I only knew that I could not stand
idly while my friend suffered...*

ABE'S HAMMER

sails through the droplets --spinning end over end...

...and HITS the farmhand in the mouth. He brings a hand to his bloody lip -- too stunned to see Abe slide up beside --

YOUNG ABRAHAM
Give me your hand Will!

Will's in too much pain to move. Abe is suddenly picked up by the collar --

FARMHAND
You little sack of sh --

-- and PUNCHED in the gut. Everything goes SLOW again...

Abe clutches his stomach; doubles over. He falls to his knees, then onto his side -- coming face-to-face with --

WILL

lying in the mud. Raindrops mixing with the blood running down his back; the tears on his cheeks.

WHACK! Now the belt HITS Abe's back as the farmhand unleashes his rage. He's raising the belt for a second hit, when -- CLOCK! -- he leaves his feet as Thomas lays him out with a right hook.

BARTS (O.S.)
What the hell is this?

Only RAIN now. It's the voice *no one* wants to hear...

JACK BARTS

stands on the porch, master of all he beholds. Finally...

BARTS (CONT'D)
(Thomas)
Did you strike this man?

THOMAS
He was beating my so --

BARTS
DID YOU STRIKE THIS MAN, Lincoln?

THOMAS
You can't treat us like slaves! We're
free men!

The farmhand gets to his feet, seething. He gives Barts a
look -- asking his permission. Barts shakes his head -- no.

BARTS
Very well, Mr. Lincoln. If it's
freedom you want...consider yourself
free from the burden of my employ.

As Thomas reacts --

BARTS (CONT'D)
And the debt you've been working off --
I'd like it paid in full, with
interest. Now, please.

THOMAS
(losing his temper)
I've paid you back three times over!

BARTS
Then you'll pay me a fourth, and be
happy to do it!

THOMAS
If you get one more penny from me, Mr.
Barts...
(steps forward)
It'll come with a fist wrapped around
it.

ABE (V.O.)
*I'd never been more proud of my father
than I was that day...nor would I ever
forget the image of a poor man
standing up to his powerful
oppressor...*

THE OTHER WORKERS

can't help but hide their smiles. Thomas is saying what
they've *dreamed* of, but dared not say.

BARTS
Very well, Mr. Lincoln...

Barts looks past him, where --

NANCY

kneels over Abe in the rain, wiping the blood from his brow.

BARTS (CONT'D)
There are other ways of collecting a
debt...

EXT. THE LINCOLN CABIN - DAY

A lonely little outpost surrounded by dark woods on all
sides. Thomas SPLITS logs in front, SINGING happily, while --

INT. THE LINCOLN CABIN - SAME

Nancy dries her hands on her apron and checks on Abe -- who's
awake; lying on his side.

YOUNG ABRAHAM
I'm sorry mama.

NANCY
What on earth for?

YOUNG ABRAHAM
If -- if I hadn't hit that man, father
wouldn't have lost his job.

NANCY
(considers, then)
Well, like your father says: "when put
to good use, the heart and the mind
are a whole lot stronger than a fist."

Nancy throws a glance over her shoulder to the --

WINDOW

where her burly husband SPLITS another log with his ax.

NANCY (CONT'D)
(back/a whisper)
But between you and me? Sometimes it's
OK to sock somebody in the nose.

She smiles. He smiles back. Nancy flutters over to a high
cabinet and grabs --

NANCY (CONT'D)

I was saving this for your birthday.

She hands him something wrapped in brown paper. He studies it, then unwraps a leather journal (the one he's *dreamt* of).

YOUNG ABRAHAM

It must've cost a fortu --

NANCY

Never you mind that. Go on, read the inscription.

Abe opens the front cover; concentrates on every word:

YOUNG ABRAHAM

(reading)

"We...mere..."

NANCY

"Merely..."

YOUNG ABRAHAM

"We...merely pass to dust...but our words and deeds...live..."

NANCY

"Forever."

(beat)

Happy Birthday, baby boy.

She leans in and kisses his forehead. Abe examines the journal for a moment, then --

YOUNG ABRAHAM

Mama? What did Mr. Barts mean when he said, "other ways of collecting a debt?"

Thomas enters carrying an armful of wood -- HUMMING, oblivious to their conversation.

NANCY

Don't you worry, Abraham...Father will protect us...

YOUNG ABRAHAM

I'll protect you, mama.

And he means it. As they share a hug...

ABE (V.O.)
*Our roof leaked in the spring, the
 bugs ate us alive in summer, and we
 froze half to death in winter...*

INT. THE LINCOLN CABIN - NIGHT

The Lincolns are fast asleep. Thomas and Nancy in their bed, Abe in his loft -- the last of a candle FLICKERING beside him as he writes in his new journal.

ABE (V.O.)
*But we were together. They were the
 happiest days I would ever know...*
 (beat)
And they were about to end.

The candle suddenly CRACKLES and -- WHOOSH -- *blows out on its own*, as if by a spirit. Abe hears the CREAKING of the cabin door. The FOOTSTEPS of someone entering...

He pulls the covers over his head -- his breath quickened by a sense of danger; shuts his eyes and remains still. *It's dark out there -- and there's something in that darkness.*

From the imagined safety of his covers, he hears the FOOTSTEPS recede as quickly as they came...the door CREAKS shut. He waits a long BEAT as his heart races, then...

Peeks his head out. Dark. Quiet. The candle suddenly FLICKERS *back to life on its own*, startling him as --

NANCY (PRE-LAP)
 The DEVIL!

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE LINCOLN CABIN - DAY

Horrible, muffled SHRIEKS from inside...

INT. THE LINCOLN CABIN - SAME

Nancy, sweating and wild-eyed, writhes on the bed, restrained by SEVERAL MEN -- SCREAMING; delusional.

NANCY
 I see the eyes of the DEVIL!

Abe cowers in the doorframe and watches as a DOCTOR places his hand on Thomas's shoulder and pulls him aside.

We don't hear their conversation, but Thomas's face tells us all we need to know -- he begins to weep.

ABE (V.O.)
*The doctor had never seen anything
like it. There was no diagnosis; no
remedy; no hope...*

Nancy's arm FLAILS OUT where Thomas used to stand and Abe runs to it. He grabs her hand, GASPS IN HORROR.

THOMAS
Abraham, get away!

CLOSE ON MARY'S ARM

Her veins are jet black and raised -- an ebony spiderweb darkly throbbing -- almost breaking the skin.

Abe watches as a branch of the spiderweb BURSTS in Mary's wrist. She HOWLS as the blackness seeps within her flesh.

ABE (V.O.)
There was only waiting...

TIME CUT:

Night has fallen, and Nancy has drifted into a coma. The doctor is gone; Thomas and Will have dozed off.

Abe kneels at his mother's bedside -- holding vigil as the fire CRACKLES behind him. He presses a compress to one of the many hard black welts that now cover her body.

She stirs. He dips her compress in a bowl of water, WRINGS it out, and puts it back on her forehead...

A hand grabs his wrist.

NANCY (O.S.)
(weak)
My baby...

Nancy is suddenly, completely lucid -- her face smiling and warm; her eyes on him. She places a hand on Abe's cheek.

NANCY (CONT'D)
My baby boy...

Abe's eyes come alive. *It's a miracle...*

YOUNG ABRAHAM

Mama?

NANCY

We merely pass to dust, Abraham...

YOUNG ABRAHAM

(tears on his face)

Mama I thought you were --

NANCY

Our -- our words...

Her hand slips away; eyes close; muscles relax...

NANCY (CONT'D)

Our deeds live...

YOUNG ABRAHAM

Mama?

As he shakes her; crying and SHOUTING...

PRIEST (PRE-LAP)

Speed her to thy Kingdom, Lord...

CUT TO:

EXT. A HILLSIDE OVERLOOKING THE CREEK - DAY

Thomas stands over a mound of dirt and a small wooden grave marker. A PRIEST recites a prayer.

YOUNG ABRAHAM

stands apart; stone-faced and silent.

ABE (V.O.)

*Mama once told me that I hadn't cried
when I was born...that I'd simply
opened my eyes, looked at her smiling
face, and smiled back.*

(beat)

My light was gone.

The Priest blesses the grave then walks toward a distant carriage. Thomas and Abe remain. The WIND whips.

THOMAS

I can't do it...

A tear cuts through the dirt on Thomas's face.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I can't stand here and pretend.

(beat)

I don't know how he did it...but God help me, I know he did...

YOUNG ABRAHAM

Father?

THOMAS

You and I both know it wasn't any "sickness" that killed your mother.

And *something dies* behind Abe's eyes.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It was him...it was Jack Barts.

Most boys his age would scream; cry. Instead, we see the first glimpse of Abraham Lincoln's quiet rage; devotion on his face. He means it with every ounce of his little body when he says --

YOUNG ABRAHAM

Then I'll kill him...

THOMAS

There's nothing we can do...

YOUNG ABRAHAM

(growing angrier)

We can fight back!

THOMAS

No...we've lost enough already.

(turns to him)

Promise me...promise we you won't go and do anything foolish.

YOUNG ABRAHAM

You want me to look away?!?

THOMAS

I want you to LIVE!

His voice has left a heavy silence in its wake. As they stand there -- their best clothes FLAPPING in the wind...

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE

Of Abe over the next eight years -- CIRCLING around him as he grows bigger; stronger:

-- CIRCLING Young Abe as he sits beside his mother's grave -- writing in his journal...

ABE (V.O.)

I tried...

-- CIRCLING as he CHOPS wood with an ax that weighs nearly as much as he does -- his arms shaking as he raises it above his head...

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*For eight long years I tried to do as
Father told me -- tried to forget...*

-- CIRCLING around a TEENAGED ABE -- taller, more muscular, CHOPPING wood on the same stump.

A commotion draws his eyes to a neighboring cabin, where two WHITE CHILDREN look on, helpless, as a pair of WELL-DRESSED MEN beat their FATHER for some unknown offense.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Tried to look away...

Abe looks down at the ax in his hands...

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*But I couldn't stomach living as a
slave to fear...*

-- CIRCLING until at last we find ABRAHAM LINCOLN (20) sitting at his mother's grave -- writing in his journal; a pistol beside him. He stops -- looks at her grave marker...

ABE (CONT'D)

Happy birthday, Mama...

-- A CIRCLING FLASH of his attack on Barts: Abe's arm WHIPS UP, and a PISTOL FIRES sharply as we --

The FLASHBACK ENDS as we --

SMASH TO:

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - 1829 - DAY

Twenty-year-old Abe darts awake in bed and shields himself from an attacker -- but he's alone; drenched in sweat. Wearing pants and nothing else -- revealing the cuts and bruises from his failed attack on Barts. He takes in a breath, then the room:

Red, black and gold. Minimal, functional and beautiful. Daylight sneaking in though drawn curtains; his --

LEATHER JOURNAL

waiting on a small bedside table.

But none of that matters at the moment...because a woman is SCREAMING somewhere in this house.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE (HALLWAY) - MOMENTS LATER

Abe walks cautiously toward the source of the distress -- the walls lined with mounted Katana swords; guns and other weaponry. Abe grabs a sword from its perch as he goes...

It's Barts...it has to be...

Scattered among the weapons, various oil paintings -- most of the *same blonde woman*. Their styles evolving; the skill of their painter changing.

And whisky bottles. *Lots and lots of empty whisky bottles.*

Tip-toeing -- ready to confront Barts with his Katana. He reaches a door at the end of the hall. The screams are *clearly* coming from behind it.

Readying himself...*one, two...NOW!* He *BARGES* in and comes face-to-face with --

A NAKED WOMAN

in a copper tub -- straddling a raven-haired, fair-skinned gentleman named Henry Sturges.

Shit. Those were screams of pleasure.

ABE
(flummoxed)
I'm, I'm sorr -- I thought --

Abe just stands there -- half embarrassed, half enticed. The woman makes no attempt to cover up.

HENRY

Might I suggest we begin by closing
the door?

The door -- of course! Abe does exactly that. A BEAT in the hall. Shirtless. Holding a sword.

ABE

I'm sorry! I -- I didn't see anything!
OK I saw everything, but I'm sorry!

The door OPENS, and the woman (holding a bundle of clothes to shield her nakedness) emerges. She studies Abe for a BEAT, CLOSES the door behind her and starts down the hall.

HENRY (O.S.)

(through the door)

"Who are you? Where am I? What
happened?" Shall we dive right in, or
is she too distracting?

A BEAT.

Indeed, Abe is watching the woman's *naked backside* saunter away, dumbstruck.

ABE

(snaps out)

Wha, uh --

HENRY (O.S.)

Well, I can hardly blame you for that.

(beat)

Who I am is Henry Sturges; where you
are is my home; and what happened is
that you were very nearly done in by a
vampire.

Wait -- did he just say...

HENRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Fortunately for you, Mr. Lincoln --
hunting them is something of a hobby.

ABE

A wha -- how do you know my name?

Abe hears DRIPPING through the door -- the sounds of a man getting out of the tub.

HENRY (O.S.)

An eleven-year-old boy attacks the employee of a wealthy vampire, who, in turn, kills the boy's mother. Yet, when the boy learns this -- he doesn't seek revenge.

The SOUNDS of a wardrobe opening...

HENRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He controls his rage. Channels it. Improves his body and mind through labor; through books. And I like this. I think, "Here's someone I can teach; here's a recruit -- a fellow vampire hunter." But then I watch the boy carry out his first hunt, and I realize -- he's an idiot. Totally unprepared. Why, I doubt he even knew his target was a vampire.

ABE

Jack Barts is a...vampire?

HENRY (O.S.)

Yes, well, the living don't generally beat you senseless after you've put two bullets in their skull.

(beat)

I would've intervened sooner, but for someone who had no idea what he was fighting, you were fighting surprisingly well.

ABE

(feels his ribs/winces)

Next time...feel free to intervene sooner.

The door OPENS and Henry emerges, fully dressed. Suit, sunglasses and all.

HENRY

Tell me, Mr. Lincoln -- if you had a choice between doing something truly extraordinary -- changing the world, or seeing Jack Barts suffer at the end of a blade...which would it be?"

ABE
(thinks, then)
I don't care about "changing the world." Seeing Barts suffer would be extraordinary enough.

HENRY
Then I bid you good day.

With that, he continues down the hall.

ABE
Wait, where are you going?

HENRY
Since you so rudely interrupted one of my vices, I plan on indulging the other. It's nearly nine o'clock. The bars will be opening...

EXT. A BUSTLING ST. LOUIS STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Henry emerges from his two-story brick house, with its wide double verandah. Abe eagerly follows behind him.

ABE
Wait! You can't just say all that and walk away!

HENRY
And yet I'm doing precisely that.

Abe (who draws disapproving looks as he walks along *shirtless*) is suddenly struck by a thought --

ABE
You could help me kill him! Kill Barts! I could pay you!

HENRY
The word you're looking for is "destroy." It's quite a feat to "kill" that which is already dead. And my services aren't for sale.

ABE
Then teach me! Teach me to fight as you do!

HENRY

Mr. Lincoln, I'm looking for soldiers.
Men to devote themselves to a cause;
men to fight a war...not boys with
scores to settle.

Abe stops as Henry keeps walking.

ABE

You don't understand! My mother was
MURDERED!

Henry stops; turns back.

HENRY

And if I teach you how to murder her
murderer? So what? How will it honor
her memory? How will it benefit the
next boy whose mother is taken?

An interesting point.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Did you think you were alone in your
suffering? There is darkness
everywhere, Mr. Lincoln. Right now, on
this very street. I can teach you how
to see it; destroy it. But I shall not
waste my time teaching you how to kill
one vampire. If vengeance is all you
seek -- seek it elsewhere.

ABE

No, I -- I want to learn. Please, I'll
do anything you say.

HENRY

Then surrender.

Not the reply Abe was expecting.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Rule number one: what we do, we do not
for ourselves -- not for one man; but
for the good of all mankind.

(beat)

To live by that rule, you must
surrender all expectations of an
ordinary life, Mr. Lincoln. Surrender
all notions of revenge. Think you're
capable of that?

As we HOLD on Abe, considering his reply...

ABE (V.O.)
*I told him what he wanted to hear; and
hoped to God he believed me...*

CUT TO:

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE (HALLWAY) - LATER

Back in the hallway -- wall-mounted weapons of every kind
running its length.

HENRY
Choose the weapon that speaks to you.
I'd suggest avoiding guns, since that
didn't work out very well.

Abe walks along -- passing throwing stars; a Katana sword.
Along the way, he can't help but notice --

ABE
Who is she?

Henry traces Abe's eye-line to a painting -- the mysterious
blonde who occupies so much wall space.

HENRY
Rule number two: there are things one
must keep to one's self. Choose...

Abe continues past weapon after weapon with no luck. He
reaches the window at the end of the hall, and sees an --

AX

buried in a stump outside, beside a pile of firewood. Henry
steps behind him. Looking out the window...

ABE
Father says a man isn't a man till he
can handle an ax.

HENRY
Then let us see you handle it...

CUT TO:

EXT. A DENSE FOREST - DAY

The trees here soaring; thick. Henry motions to the particularly thick tree beside him.

HENRY

Before we can begin, you must cut this down with a single swing.

Abe studies the trunk.

ABE

That tree? Impossible. It has to be four feet across.

HENRY

Oh but it isn't a tree. It's what you hate most in the world.

(beat)

So tell me, Mr. Lincoln -- what do you hate?

ABE

(thinks, then)

I hate...Jack Barts.

HENRY

Very well.

(the tree)

Then strike him down.

Henry steps aside. Abe (who thinks this whole thing is *stupid*) raises his ax and STRIKES -- barely chipping bark.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Clearly, you don't hate him that much.

(a beat)

Tell me what you hate.

ABE

(sighs, then)

I hate...vampires.

Henry motions to the tree. Abe SWINGS. The blade lodges in the trunk, but doesn't go very far *through* it.

HENRY

Pathetic! Tell me what you hate!

ABE
 (thinks deeper)
 I hate...I hate that my mother was
 taken away.

Henry's getting under his skin; breaking him down. We see him
 raw. Slowly, it begins to roll...

ABE (CONT'D)
 I hate that we were afraid. That
 Mother; Father -- that everyone we
 knew lived in fear.
 (beat)
 I hate...I hate that I was...

He suddenly begins to *break down* -- tears in his eyes.

HENRY
 Too small? Too weak? That you failed
 to protect her?

ABE
 Yes...

HENRY
 That you let her DIE?

Abe SCREAMS and STRIKES the tree -- SHATTERING its trunk;
 debris *everywhere* as the rest CRASHES to the earth.

Splinters FALLING like raindrops. A long BEAT.

ABE
 (realizing)
 I hate...me.

Henry's look clearly says -- that's what I was waiting for.

HENRY
 (re: the other trees)
 Now cut them all down.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Henry and a *thoroughly* exhausted Abe stand atop a *pile of*
downed trees just above the flowing waters below.

HENRY

Well...if vampire hunting doesn't work out, you'll be a helluva woodsman.

ABE

(out of breath)

My...my arms feel like they're going to fall off.

HENRY

Then let's give your legs a try...

Henry KICKS out the tree trunk that Abe stands upon -- sending it floating out into the river.

ABE

What are you doing?!?

HENRY

Rule number three: expect the unexpected.

Abe struggles to keep his balance as his log floats into the river -- kicking his legs as it spins.

Henry KICKS tree after tree; Abe leaps from trunk to trunk. He careens back and forth, losing it, until:

He SPLASHES into the river -- a tree trunk KNOCKS hard into his head, sending him under the water.

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE

Of Abe improving; learning as the seasons change -- coming into his own as a vampire hunter:

-- Abe and Henry face off like gladiators in the center of the clearing; all kinds of training equipment surround them.

ABE (V.O.)

Over the next six months, Henry imparted six lifetimes worth of vampire secrets....their abilities...

HENRY

New vampires are prisoners of the night. But after a century of gradual exposure, they can tolerate the sun in limited amounts...

-- Henry poses in a display of Asian-influenced battle stances; Abe does his best to mimic his form and control.

ABE (V.O.)

Their methods....

HENRY

Vampires often lure their prey in with merriment and drink -- for the happier the victim at the moment of death, the more enriching; empowering his blood...

-- Abe and Henry sit in meditation poses; eyes closed -- the whole of St. Louis and the river below them.

ABE (V.O.)

And their weaknesses....

HENRY

(peacefully)

When Judas betrayed Jesus, what was his reward?

ABE

You know, this would be much easier if you didn't talk...

-- A RAGING fire. We WIDEN TO REVEAL Henry wearing an apron and heavy leather gloves, tending the small caldron in the flames. Abe is beside him, holding his ax.

HENRY

The answer, of course, is "thirty pieces of silver."

ABE

I knew that.

Henry pulls the cauldron out of the flames -- a gallon of molten silver inside. As he pours some of it into a small iron mold...

HENRY

At that moment, those pieces became a symbol of betraying God. Of evil. At that moment -- silver became a curse upon the cursed. You will never see a vampire with silver on his person -- nor see them reflected in mirrors.

ABE
 (astonished)
 Because mirrors are made of...

HENRY
Silver, Abraham.

Henry PLUNGES the mold into a bucket of water. Steam HISSES for a moment, then stops. He opens the mold and hands Abe --

A SILVER BULLET

perfectly formed; gleaming and unique.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 The one thing God has placed beyond the vampire's reach. The one thing he can never possess, and the only thing that renders him powerless.

As Abe studies his bullet, Henry takes Abe's ax and dips the head into the molten silver, coating it.

-- Henry continues Abe's teaching as they battle each other -- Abe's Kung Fu better than ever.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 Some will keep their victims on the brink of death for days -- even weeks on end; draining them slowly. It is a means of causing needless suffering. Better vampires frown upon it.

ABE
 "Better?" As in good vampires?

CUT TO:

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE (PARLOR) - NIGHT

Henry has an ancient, Medieval book open -- its every detail hand-drawn centuries ago. Spanning two pages, an ornate --

ILLUSTRATION

depicts *two groups of vampires*. On one side, human-looking creatures huddle in the darkness -- sharing the blood of a grown man. On the other, a group of demonic vampires has overrun a village -- pulling families from their homes; children from their beds.

HENRY

There are those vampires who follow
the code -- who drink only what they
need; who don't prey upon children.

Henry points to the other, *darker* side of the picture.

HENRY (CONT'D)

But there are others -- those who kill
for pleasure; who see themselves as
gods; as wolves in a world of sheep.

Henry points to the illustrated demon hovering above the
others -- clearly their leader.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(a dark beat)

The *figlio del diavolo*.

ABE

The what?

HENRY

The oldest, most powerful of his kind.
It's said he believes vampires to be
the chosen inheritors of the earth;
that he's on a righteous quest to free
them from the shadows.

(beat)

They call him "Adam." *He from who all
others were born...*

On "Adam's" frightful illustrated face, we --

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE (ABE'S ROOM) - NIGHT

Abe writes in his journal by candlelight, covered by a sheet
in bed. He hears Henry DESCENDING the stairs.

ABE (V.O.)

*Night after night, Henry went
hunting...never permitting me to join
him; ordering me to stay in my room
till morning. I liked my room...but
I've never been worth a damn at
following orders...*

When he hears the door SHUT, Abe throws off the sheet --
fully dressed beneath it.

CUT TO:

EXT. A CITY ALLEY - NIGHT

A prostitute (the one we met in Henry's tub) stumbles into the alley, laughing with her MALE COMPANION. She pushes him against the wall as --

A DARK FIGURE

creeps along the rooftop above...

PROSTITUTE

Not too rough, now -- I have a devil
of a toothache.

She kneels out of sight. For a moment, the man is transported by pleasure -- his eyes closed. When they open, there's --

A DEMON

hanging upside-down in front of his face!

He disappears before he can scream. Blood rains down, and a limp body falls back into the alley with a sickening THUD.

HENRY

in his vampire form -- jumps down into the alley, reaches into his coat and hands the girl a few bills.

She kisses his cheek and hurries off. Henry sinks his fangs into the man's neck, drinking...quieting the hunger at last, until --

ABE (O.S.)

So...

Henry drops his prey and spins around, ready to fight -- but stops when he sees --

ABE

standing at the mouth of the alley, holding his ax.

ABE (CONT'D)

This is why you always eat alone.

Henry wipes his chin; his vampire face fading away as Abe tries to hide his horror at what he sees.

ABE (CONT'D)

You lied to me, Henry...

HENRY
You weren't ready to know.

ABE
"Ready to know" what -- that you're a
vampire?

HENRY
Who feeds only on the wicked.

ABE
(the corpse)
And what wickedness was he guilty of --
having the misfortune of walking into
your trap?

HENRY
If I told you the things that man had
done; the crimes he'd committed --
you'd have killed him yourself.

ABE
So you're his self-appointed judge?
His executioner?

HENRY
I'm on the right side, Abraham.

Abe eyes Henry with disgust -- the last six months flashing
before him. *All of it a waste...all of it a lie...*

ABE
I'm here to hunt vampires, Henry --
not partner with them.

Abe turns and walks away, until --

HENRY
You're not the only one who lost
everything to vampires...

Abe keeps walking...

HENRY (CONT'D)
You asked me about the woman in the
paintings...

Now he stops. Simple curiosity at first...

HENRY (CONT'D)
 She's my reason. The one whose memory
 I honor...

FLASH TO:

EXT. A WOODED ROAD - 1680 -(FLASHBACK) - DUSK

Even though it's over 150 years ago, Henry looks exactly the same -- only more vibrant; more *alive*. He walks hand-in-hand with his very-pregnant WIFE.

HENRY (V.O.)
 I'd heard the stories; the myths like
 everyone else. And like everyone else,
 I paid them no mind.

-- They come upon a carriage with a broken wheel -- a lone MAN struggling to repair it; his back turned.

HENRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And so, when I saw a stranger in need,
 I did what any Christian would have...

-- When Henry offers to help, the man spins around and bears his fangs (*though we still don't see the rest of his face*).

-- Running for their lives through the woods; chased by a *demon* -- its face blurred by the horror of the memory.

-- Henry pulling his wife along, but she's too slow. As they're overtaken -- SMASHED against the tree trunks...

HENRY (CONT'D)
 He took everything I had...

-- Henry reaches out to his wife as they both lie bloodied on the ground -- her BREATHING shallow; labored.

-- The vampire cuts his own wrist with a clawed finger and forces Henry to drink the blood that gushes forth.

HENRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And cursed me to live with my grief
 for all eternity.

-- Henry lies on the cold earth, SCREAMING -- his body undergoing the vampire transformation...

BACK TO:

Abe's been softened by the horror of Henry's story.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I've spent my death hunting those who kill without conscience. Through the centuries, I've searched for others to help me. Trained them to hunt as I do.

ABE

There are others like me?

HENRY

A handful -- enough to keep the balance between the living world and the dead; to keep vampires in the darkness. By day, we're bankers; politicians; farmers. By night...we're the silent guardians of Man.

Abe reacts. It's a lot to take in.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I deserve hell, as all vampires do. But I'd like to do some good before I go -- and I'd like you to help me.

Abe considers. A pregnant BEAT.

ABE

I hope you won't take it personally if I start locking my door at night.

CUT TO:

EXT. ON THE RIVER - LATER

Abe and Henry walk home along the river -- the moon reflected in its undisturbed surface.

HENRY

Absurd. What reason would I have to kill you?

ABE

Let's see...you're a vampire?

HENRY

And so the rest is written? Have I not the mind of a man? The same needs? To be clothed and fed and entertained?

ABE
It's the "fed" part I'm concerned
with.

HENRY
Well you needn't worry, Abraham. Some
men are just too interesting to
kill...

Henry stops cold. He hears something we can't hear. Senses
something. He *grabs Abe* and holds him down.

They huddle in silence. A series of SPLASHES up ahead as --

THREE RUNAWAY SLAVES

leap headlong into the water and swim hurriedly across --
toward the far bank.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(whispered; instructive)
There. Do you see it?

ABE
See what?

HENRY..
What they run from.

But Abe scans the dark shoreline...*nothing*. Then he looks up
into the trees and sees the outline of --

A STALKING VAMPIRE

crouching on an overhanging branch like a vulture. Abe looks
to the slaves, who've reached the far shore.

The VAMPIRE LEAPS -- launching himself from the trees and
over the river. It flies through the air and LANDS squarely
on one of its prey. Abe lifts his axe and starts toward the
water -- but Henry grabs him; *pins him roughly*.

ABE
(struggling)
We have to help them!

HENRY
We're assassins, Abraham -- not
saviors! Rule number four: leave no
witnesses to your work, living or
dead.

The SCREAMS of slaves pierce the night. *Fuck it...*

ABE

My father told me to look away...

(beat)

I didn't listen to him either.

Abe STRIKES Henry with the blunt side of his ax, freeing himself. He hurries toward the water's edge, but Henry is quick to recover and tackle him.

Teacher and student fight -- Abe SHATTERING trees with his ax; Henry KICKING with enough force to kill five lesser men.

All of Abe's skills are evident: his quickness; his strength; his balance. Together with his silver ax, he's a force to be reckoned with.

So much so that he *turns the tables* -- pinning Henry, raising his ax and --

HENRY

("uncle!")

ENOUGH!

They stop. A long BEAT -- the SCREAMS of the slaves no longer heard. Despite everything, Henry looks...*pleased*.

He sits up...

HENRY (CONT'D)

I can see a man's purpose, Abraham. I can see it as clearly as I see you before me now. Yours is, and has always been, to fight tyranny. From this moment on, mine shall be to see that you succeed. I've given you the whole of my knowledge on hunting and destroying vampires...

(beat)

Now I shall give you their names.

CUT TO:

EXT. A BUSY SPRINGFIELD STREET - DAY

TITLE: ***SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS***

Abe rounds a corner on horseback, taking care not to collide with a CARRIAGE as it passes.

ABE (V.O.)

Before I could hunt, I needed a public life that would complement my secret one. Something interesting -- a lawyer, perhaps.

A BOOK

Protrudes from his saddlebag: *On the Laws of England*. As Abe navigates his horse through the market, we PULL BACK TO REVEAL the street in all its bustling glory.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But for now, I had no money; no connections -- nothing but my ax, a few books, and the knowledge Henry had given me.

EXT. SPEED'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

His horse tied up, Abe's about to enter the store, when --

SPEED (O.S)

THIEVING SON OF A BITCH!

The scrawny, wild-haired JOSHUA SPEED (20's) kicks a much ROUNDER, HEAVIER MAN in the ass out the front door -- and keeps kicking him -- down the steps into the street.

SPEED (CONT'D)

I ever see you again, I'll have your BALLS AS A COIN PURSE!

Speed punches the poor sap in the back of the head as he scurries away. Satisfied, he wipes his hands on his apron and heads back toward Abe -- cheery as can be.

SPEED (CONT'D)

Afternoon sir!

He extends a hand. Abe shakes it -- uncertain.

SPEED (CONT'D)

Joshua Speed, at your service!

ABE

Abraham...Lincoln.

Speed darts past him into the store.

INT. SPEED'S GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Abe follows him to the counter, digging a folded list from his pocket. Shelves of foods, fabrics and other essentials everywhere.

ABE

There are some, uh...items I require.

SPEED

A friend in need is a friend of Speed!

Speed takes the list; starts copying it.

ABE

I don't suppose you know of any rooms for rent, Mr. Speed.

SPEED

(writing)

And what sort of room might you be looking for sir?

ABE

A cheap one, as I've spent all my money on law books, and have none to spare at the moment.

Speed puts his pencil down.

SPEED

Well sir, since you have "none," am I to take your meaning as "cheap," or "free of charge?"

ABE

On credit.

SPEED

Ah, yes. I've learned that "on credit" is French for "I shall never pay you."

ABE

I square my debts!

SPEED

All the same, you won't find such a room in Springfield. People here are strangely accustomed to being compensated.

Speed looks down at the list.

SPEED (CONT'D)
And these? Are these to be purchased
"on credit" as well?

Abe SNATCHES the list from Speed...

ABE
Good day.

...and heads for the door.

SPEED
There is one room, Mr. Lincoln.

Abe stops.

SPEED (CONT'D)
I was recently forced to part ways
with a fat, thieving associate, and am
therefore in need of a replacement.
(beat)
There's a room upstairs. It isn't
much, but I suppose it could be had on
credit -- were the tenant willing to
work here in return.

It's *clearly* an offer he can't refuse.

INT. THE ROOM ABOVE SPEED'S STORE - NIGHT

Abe sits at a small desk, writing a letter by candlelight.

ABE (V.O.)
*I set out earning my keep as the weeks
turned into months...*

INT. SPEED'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Abe and Speed stand at the counter, doing inventory.

ABE (V.O.)
*Waiting for that first letter -- that
first name to arrive...*

The bell on the front door JINGLES. Abe looks up as a --

PETITE, PRETTY BRUNETTE (20)

enters with a basket and browses.

SPEED

Morning, Miss Todd.

(Abe's stare/a whisper)

Put it out of your head, Lincoln.

She's too rich and you're too ugly.

Undeterred, Abe straightens his apron and --

ABE

Morning, ma'am. May I help you?

She looks up -- way up -- at him, then goes back to browsing.

MARY

You're new.

ABE

Yes ma'am. Abra -- uh, Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln ma'am.

MARY

Well Mr. Lincoln, you needn't call me
"ma'am" as if I'm some haggard
spinster, thank you.

She reaches into her basket and hands him a list.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'll be needing these.

ABE

Of course.

(a beat)

And if you'll permit my saying so,
there's no chance of your being
mistaken for a "haggard" anything. No
matter what a rube like me says.

Mary looks up; taken aback. The door JINGLES again.

GENTLEMAN (O.S.)

There you are!

A GENTLEMAN (20's) enters. Judging by his clothes, he's as
wealthy as he is handsome.

GENTLEMAN (CONT'D)

(arrogant)

You mustn't flit from store to store
so quickly, darling.

MARY
(sarcasm)
Perhaps if you didn't stop to jaw with
every gentleman in Springfield...

The gentleman is suddenly aware of the tall, odd man in his
space.

GENTLEMAN
(jealous/to Mary)
I could say the same of you.
(turns to Abe)
Stephen Douglas, how do you do?

ABE
Abraham Lincoln.

DOUGLAS
Are you a voter, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE
I...

DOUGLAS
Do you believe in keeping slavery out
of Illinois? Because I'm running for
the Legislature to --

MARY
I'm sure he'd love to hear your
campaign speech, but Mr. Lincoln was
just about to attend to my list.

A BEAT. Abe offers a courteous bow, then retreats behind the
counter (Mary sneaking a glance as he does).

SPEED
(verge of laughter)
Oh that was spectacular. That was
inspiring, really.

But Abe doesn't care (and doesn't take his eyes off Mary),
until a POST RIDER enters thumbing through a handful of mail.

POST RIDER
Letter for you, Mr. Lincoln.

As Abe reaches into his pocket for a coin to pay him with, he
reads the return address..."H. Sturges."

Hiding the envelope from the others, Abe opens it hurriedly.

HENRY (V.O.)
*Abraham...in the spirit of your
newfound purpose, let us begin with a
name familiar to you. Not because he
took your mother...but so he never
takes another...*

Without a word, Abe rushes out of the store, past --

MARY
Excuse me --

But he's gone, *with her list*. Mary looks to Speed.

SPEED
(a sheepish shrug)
He's new.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE JRB SHIPPING COMPANY - LATER

Jacks Barts waddles along the river, FUMBLING for the key chain in his pocket -- his *eye patch and deformed mouth* constant reminders of what happened on this very pier.

INT. JACK BARTS'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

He opens the door; shuffles toward his desk. But he stops cold halfway there -- something's not right. He can *smell* it.

His door SLAMS shut behind him! Barts turns, startled by --

THE GIANT FIGURE

Lurking in the shadows against the wall, already in complete control without moving a muscle or saying a word.

BARTS
What is this!?! How dare you
trespass!?!

Abe steps forward, crossing pools of shadow and light -- something silver glinting at us every few steps from beneath his long coat...

ABE
On the contrary...it's you who's
trespassed against me.

BARTS

Be gone at once, I warn you! You have
no idea who you're dea --

ABE

You're in no position to issue
warnings.

Abe keeps pressing forward...

BARTS

What do you want!?!

ABE

Something you cannot give...I want the
mother you took from me.

Towering over Barts now -- into the light...

BARTS

Abraham fucking Lincoln...

Abe pulls out the ax that had been concealed beneath his
coat. He swings his target's neck, but Barts is able to duck
beneath the blade.

He vamps out and counterattacks -- grabbing Abe's coat and
SMASHING him into the opposite wall!

Abe slinks to the floor, stunned.

BARTS (CONT'D)

And what of the things you took from
me, Mr. Lincoln!?!

Barts takes off his eye patch and drops it on the floor,
revealing the unforgettable "bullet eye" beneath. Emphasizing
each word with a brutal kick to Abe's midsection:

BARTS (CONT'D)

(kicking)

Look-at-my-FACE! I've been forced to
feed on the blood of pigs and dogs
because of you!

He composes himself; runs a hand through his hair; laughs.

BARTS (CONT'D)

You're wrong about your mother, you
know. I can give her to you.

(MORE)

BARTS (CONT'D)

I dare say you'll be joining her in
hell momentari --

Abe sweeps Barts's feet from under him, reaches into his coat and drives a stake through his heart!

Barts clutches it; confusion on his face as dark blood begins to pour from his mouth and nostrils. His lips opening and closing -- a fish trying to draw breath...

His good eye fearful -- looking at Abe, who rises to his full, intimidating height.

He raises his ax -- considers beheading him. Instead, he lowers the blade and just stares at what he's done.

ABE (V.O.)

*I'd expected to feel satisfaction;
even a measure of peace. But I felt
nothing. Only the wish that he'd
suffered more. Only the need to
destroy another...*

(beat)

Only the need to destroy them all.

SMASH TO:

A MONTAGE

Of Abe coming into his own as a vampire hunter, INTERCUT with images of Henry's letters arriving, one by one:

-- Riding through the night woods in his hunting coat...

ABE (V.O.)

*At first, Henry's errands took me no
more than a day or two from
Springfield...*

-- Abe is the sole customer in a pub, his back to a BARTENDER. He pulls a silver pocket watch from his coat, FLIPS it open, and sneaks a look into the --

MIRROR

hidden under its lid. *The bartender isn't there.* His clothes seem to move *by themselves*, as if worn by a ghost.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*I carried them out, using the skills
he'd given me...*

-- Minutes later, he and Abe are locked in *vicious* combat. Abe's thrown into a chair, *SPLINTERING* it. On his back, Abe grabs a broken chair leg and *stakes him through the heart!*

-- In a cobbler's shop, where a SHOEMAKER looks up from his repairs to find a towering, ax-wielding figure above him.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Never leaving witnesses...

ABE (CONT'D)
Aaron Stibel?

SHOEMAKER
Yes?

ABE
Junior or Senior?

SHOEMAKER
Junior.

Abe swiftly beheads him and walks out.

ABE (V.O.)
*In time, however, the missions grew
more distant; more dangerous...*

-- In his room, modifying his silver ax by gas light.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And the weapons became my own...

SMASH TO:

INT. AN EMPTY CHURCH - NIGHT

A VAMPIRE PRIEST has taken Abe's ax away. Our hero (badly beaten) crawls toward the altar, hoping to reach a --

SHARP CRUCIFIX

to use as a weapon.

PRIEST
You DARE bring murderous designs to a
place of worship!?!

THUD! The priest presses the top of the ax against Abe's head -- pinning him against the altar. Squeezing his skull.

VAMPIRE PRIEST
You dare violate the sanctity of God's
house!?!

With his last ounce of strength, Abe reaches up the ax
handle, toward the --

SMALL METAL RING

sticking out from one side.

VAMPIRE PRIEST (CONT'D)
For this, I shall sacrifi --

BOOM! His head explodes, and his body falls to the floor,
leaving Abe covered in blood and brains, thanks to the --

SMOKING SHOTGUN BARREL

embedded in his ax handle.

INT. SPEED'S GENERAL STORE - MORNING

Speed unlocks the front door and enters. Abe's already
stocking shelves -- covered in bruises and bandages.

SPEED
Merciful Christ, Lincoln!

ABE
My horse kicked me.

Speed looks him over.

SPEED
How many times?

Abe goes back to stocking the shelf.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Well, you'd better heal quickly.

ABE
You needn't worry, Speed -- I'm still
able to work.

SPEED
"Work?" To hell with work, Lincoln!
We've been invited to a dance!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE EDWARDS HOME - NIGHT

Speed and Abe (wearing an *absurdly*-small coat and trousers that end *inches* above his shoes) approach the imposing house. It's the first time we see Abe in his trademark top hat.

ABE
(fidgeting)
This suit makes me look ridiculous.

SPEED
Nonsense...the hat makes you look
ridiculous.

INT. THE EDWARDS HOME (BALLROOM) - LATER

The picture of pomp and elegance -- silk, silver and servants. MUSICIANS play Strauss's *Little Doves Waltz*.

Speed has found himself a willing DANCE PARTNER, but Abe has only managed to find a willing sofa, where he sits with his hat in his lap, watching the COUPLES twirl by.

Mary's in a crowd of GUESTS playing hostess with her sister, ELIZABETH EDWARDS (27) -- who's chatting up the rather decrepit SENATOR JEB NOLAN. As Douglas returns with drinks...

ELIZABETH
Ah, perfect timing -- Senator Nolan,
allow me to introduce Mary's dear
friend, Mr. Stephen Douglas.

DOUGLAS
How do you do, sir?

As pleasantries are exchanged, Mary keeps glancing at --

IN THE CORNER - LATER

As Abe studies the details of a wallpaper pattern...

MARY (O.S.)
It's called a "dance."

He looks up -- astonished.

MARY (CONT'D)
If they'd meant us to sit alone,
they'd have called it something else.

ABE
 (a smile)
 Yes, I suppose they would have.

She extends her hand.

MARY
 Come, Mr. Lincoln. You'll ruin the
 upholstery if you sit any longer.

THE BALLROOM FLOOR - LATER

Abe and Mary do something that *resembles* dancing as --

ELIZABETH AND DOUGLAS

look on, displeased.

MARY
 May I speak candidly?

ABE
 Have you the ability to speak
 otherwise?

MARY
 I beg you not mistake our dancing as
 anything more than civility.

ABE
 And I beg you not mistake what I'm
 doing as "dancing."

MARY
 ("please kill me")
 You know that I'm engaged to Mr.
 Douglas.

ABE
 ("what an asshole")
 He seems like a lovely gentleman.

MARY
 It's merely...seeing you there in the
 corner, you looked --
 (beat)
 I'm sure you're a very nice man, Mr.
 Lincoln, but you're...

ABE

A shopkeeper in a borrowed suit. Miss Todd, you owe me no explanations.

MARY

No, it isn't a matter of means, it's -- well, I came to Springfield looking for someone different. Someone whose life was a bit more...adventurous.

If only he could tell her.

MARY (CONT'D)

I apologize, I'm never this --

ABE

Honest?

MARY

Rude! I beg your forgiveness -- I don't know what's gotten into me.

ABE

Miss Todd, may I speak candidly?

She stops dancing and looks up at him.

ABE (CONT'D)

I too came here looking to better myself. That's why I taught myself the law. It's why I've taken an interest in politics. And it's why -- if I may be so bold -- I've taken an interest in you.

(beat)

Well, that and the fact that you speak of your betrothed as a prisoner speaks of his warden.

Mary is frozen between a gasp and a blush.

ABE (CONT'D)

As for what you "deserve," I don't know -- only that it's more than any man could hope to give -- least of all Stephen Douglas.

She's running out of reasons *not* to like this guy.

MARY

"Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness..."

ABE

"...and some have greatness thrust upon them." *Twelfth Night*, act two, scene five.

And there it is -- their first shared smile.

MARY

Mr. Lincoln, you're full of surprises.

ABE

Miss Todd, you have no idea.

As they resume dancing...

INT. SPEED'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Abe stands behind the counter, chatting up another CUSTOMER.

ABE (V.O.)

Life in Springfield settled into a new rhythm. By day, I was the cheerful shopkeeper; the budding politician...

INT. MEETING HOUSE - NIGHT

Abe dwarfs a podium as he speaks to a small, disinterested crowd. He's *deathly* nervous.

ABE

And it's why I'm, uh...why we should put more men to work making the river wider. For boats.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The secret suitor...

EXT. A PARK OUTSIDE SPRINGFIELD - DAY

Abe and Mary share an outrageously-perfect picnic lunch beneath a twisted old oak.

MARY

Why is it that you always look as if you've never slept?

ABE

Isn't it obvious? I lie awake all night, thinking about you.

Mary rolls her eyes, but can't help a smile.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And the unwelcome meddler.

INT. THE EDWARDS HOME (PARLOR) - DAY

Douglas rants to Elizabeth --

DOUGLAS
If she prefers a prairie lawyer to a gentleman, then forgive me, madam -- she's unfit to bear my children!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Abe is alone, except for his shovel and the CORPSE of a headless vampire beside him. As he digs a shallow grave, WHISTLING a happy tune...

EXT. THE EDWARDS HOME - NIGHT

Abe walks Mary to the door and removes his hat -- shy; gentlemanly. They stand in the moonlight -- *certainly the moment to kiss....*but the *height difference* between their lips seems *insurmountable*.

MARY
I had a wonderful evening, Abe.

ABE
As did I...

He fakes a smile; his chances fading, until --

Mary takes the hat tucked under his arm, places it on the ground in front of her, and *steps up onto it*. The stove pipe buckles, but holds. *Perfect kissing height*.

MARY
Well? Are you going to kiss me or aren't you?

ABE
Miss Todd, you are a woman of ravishing resourcefulness.

MARY
Mr. Lincoln, you have no idea...

They kiss; soft, meaningful. Just right.

INT. MEETING HOUSE - DAY

Abe's crowd has grown, as has his confidence.

ABE

I pledge to do everything in my power
to protect the people of Illinois! And
I shall work day and night to keep
that pledge!

INT. THE ROOM ABOVE SPEED'S STORE - NIGHT

Abe loads his weapons; buckles his hunting coat.

EXT. A BROTHEL - NIGHT

We COME OFF one of Henry's letters: "J. Nolan." Abe stands on
a quiet street -- checking the address to be sure.

SMASH TO:

INT. A RENTED ROOM - NIGHT

Abe KICKS the door open and sees --

A DEAD AFRICAN-AMERICAN GIRL

sprawled out in a horrifying pose, blood everywhere, and
decrepit old Senator Nolan -- who'd been *sucking blood* from
her naked breast until this moment.

ABE

Senator Nolan...

He vamps out and HISSES from across the room. Abe's coat
flies open as he raises a crossbow -- modified to fire stakes
instead of arrows.

The sight is enough to make the vampire reconsider. He DROPS
his victim and sprints toward one of the --

ABE (CONT'D)

No no no NOT THE WINDO --

He SMASHES through the second-story window.

ABE (CONT'D)

Shit...

Abe takes a breath, then runs after him -- shards of glass
hanging from the broken pane he's about to pass through.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*An old, familiar feeling crept back
into my life...*

INT. THE ROOM ABOVE SPEED'S STORE - NIGHT

Abe sits at the small desk, looking in a shaving mirror and pulling small pieces of glass out of his face -- *smiling*.

ABE (V.O.)
I was happy again.

INT. MEETING HOUSE - DAY

Abe's verve and confidence own the room. The large crowd listens -- rapt.

ABE
The probability that we may fall in
the struggle ought not to deter us
from a cause we believe to be just!

Fervent APPLAUSE AND CHEERS. Abe waves at a new room of Lincoln voters.

CUT TO:

EXT. A BUSY STREET IN SPRINGFIELD - DAY

Abe and Mary stroll together through a bustling market.

MARY
Of course we're celebrating! It's not
every day one becomes a member of the
legislature!

ABE
Another politician in the world is
hardly a thing to celebrate.

MARY
Abraham Lincoln, I've never met anyone
so brilliant and so stupid all at
once.

ABE
Nor I someone so complimentary and
insulting.

Mary laughs.

MARY

See? Why! Why have I fallen in love with you? It makes no sense at all.

ABE

Well, then I suppose this will make even less sense...

(stops/kneels)

Mary Todd...will you make me the happiest of men?

On Mary's astonished joy --

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ILLINOIS STATEHOUSE - DAY

Two small groups of PROTESTERS (one side *pro-slavery*, the other *against*) stand in the shadow of the Statehouse, holding signs and yelling at each other.

DOUGLAS (PRE-LAP)

Our nation is tearing itself APART!

INT. THE ILLINOIS STATEHOUSE - DAY

LEGISLATORS sit at their desks; some fanning themselves in the summer heat. Stephen Douglas is in mid-rant.

DOUGLAS

Now, some of you know that I didn't always agree with the Democrats on this issue...

A few scattered CHUCKLES of acknowledgment.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

But I have been educated, gentlemen! Educated by these troubled times! Congressmen bludgeoning each other in Washington! Neighbors killing neighbors! Why, our own dear Senator Nolan beheaded in the streets -- no doubt by a cowardly political rival...

Abe glares at Douglas from his seat.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Well I say ENOUGH! I say the need for peace outweighs the needs of the Negro! I say if the people of Illinois want slavery, then let them have it!

Democrats ROAR their approval. Abe stands as --

ABE

Gentlemen, when I hear men like Mr. Douglas arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on them personally -- though at his height I'm not sure he'd make much of a field hand.

Fellow Whigs LAUGH and CLAP their approval.

ABE (CONT'D)

As a nation, we began by declaring "all men are created equal." We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except Negroes." And where does it end? Shall we say the same of foreigners? Catholics?

(beat)

Gentlemen, we vainly imagine that this country was built by superior wisdom and virtue. But it was built with their labor. Their blood.

DOUGLAS

Mr. Lincoln -- are you saying you would rather defend the rights of blacks and vagrants than see an end to this violence?

A HUSH falls over the room.

ABE

Mr. Douglas, I'm saying that until every man is free, we're all slaves.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ROOM ABOVE SPEED'S STORE - DAY

Abe hurriedly finishes his tie, checks himself in the small mirror, then checks his silver pocket watch.

ABE

Damn...

He's late for his own wedding...

EXT. A SPRINGFIELD STREET - MINUTES LATER

Walking briskly down the street in his wedding clothes, Abe's path is suddenly blocked by a slowly-passing TRAIN.

ABE
C'mon, c'mon...

As he waits, stuck there next to an apron-wearing BUTCHER, he checks his watch again. But this time --

THE LITTLE MIRROR

inside reveals the Butcher's apron *floating by itself in mid-air*. A *vampire*...

ABE (CONT'D)
(to himself)
You've got to be kidding...

The train PASSES, and the Butcher goes on his merry way. Abe watches him walk off -- *should he? Shouldn't he?*

INT. THE EDWARDS HOME (PARLOR) - DAY

Mary is radiant in her wedding gown, REVEREND CHARLES DRESSER resplendent in his robes, and the GUESTS (including Speed and Thomas) *patiently awaiting the groom*. Mary's sister, Elizabeth, looks on with *I told you so* smugness.

REV. DRESSER
I'm sure he'll be along any moment now, dear.

SMASH TO:

INT. BUTCHER SHOP (BACK) - DAY

Abe and the Butcher Vamp are in mid-fight in the rear of the shop -- SMASHING into hanging beef; pig's heads. Without his hunting weapons, Abe is forced to improvise.

INT. THE EDWARDS HOME (PARLOR) - DAY

Everyone waiting...waiting....

INT. BUTCHER SHOP (BACK) - DAY

QUICK CUTS: of Abe frantically washing off blood; dressing wounds. We WIDEN TO REVEAL the dead Butcher -- hanging from one of the meat hooks behind him.

INT. THE EDWARDS HOME (PARLOR) - DAY

Abe BURSTS in, breathless and disheveled, and finds --

THE WEDDING PARTY

bride, guests and all, glaring at him -- displeased.

ABE

I do?

TIME CUT:

Abe and Mary hold hands as Rev. Dresser marries them in a small ceremony. All seems forgiven; joyful.

THE INSCRIPTION

on the ring he slips onto Mary's finger: "Love is Eternal."

INT. THE EDWARDS HOME (BALLROOM) - LATER

The reception is in full swing -- a classy affair. Abe and Mary are greeting guests when Thomas approaches with an AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN (20's).

ABE

(ignoring the other)

Father! I trust you're enjoying yourself?

THOMAS

Yes, yes of course.

(an awkward beat)

Aren't you going to say hello?

What? Abe turns to the other man. It takes a BEAT, then --

ABE

Will...

(embraces him)

Will! My God, look at you!

WILL

Congratulations, Abe.

ABE

Mary, this is my dear old friend, Will Johnson.

MARY

(shaking hands)

A pleasure.

THOMAS

Will's come to live and work with me in Illinois. Unlike some people, he didn't run off to the big city and leave his father in the lurch.

WILL

Your pa calls me his "good son."

ABE

Yes, well -- he always liked you better.

The reunion is broken up as Henry approaches with an empty champagne flute (and *full* bottle); sunglasses on.

ABE (CONT'D)

Mary, allow me to introduce Mr. Henry Sturges.

He takes her hand and kisses it with a slight bow.

MARY

(his hand)

Heavens -- you're as chilly as the winter wind, Mr. Sturges.

HENRY

"Henry," please. And I'm afraid it's a hazard of carrying one's own bottle.

MARY

Well, you know how the saying goes -- "cold hands, warm heart."

HENRY

I highly doubt it, madam.

CUT TO:

INT. LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD HOME (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

TITLE: **NINE MONTHS LATER**

The bedroom door opens; a MIDWIFE hands Abe an INFANT.

MIDWIFE
A son, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE
And Mary? Is she --

MIDWIFE
Fine, fine. She's resting now.

Abe looks down at the tiny being in his arms, overwhelmed.

ABE (V.O.)
*I'd been focused on death for so
long...here, at last, was something
worth living for...*

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE

Of the Lincoln family sitting for a series of portraits. As it goes on, Abe *transitions from young adulthood to middle age* -- his hair thinning; the lines on his face becoming deeper:

-- Abe, Mary, and little Robert in modest furnishings...

-- Now in a more finely-decorated parlor, Mary's hands rest on her belly in the first stages of PREGNANCY...

-- More and more *shots blend together*, becoming a *flip book* of sorts. Home movies of the 1800's -- images of family life. The Lincolns are now a family of *four* -- young EDDY nestled in his father's proud arms...

-- THE FINAL PORTRAIT: A middle-aged Abe sits alone at his desk, going through day's letters with his reading glasses...

MATCH TO:

INT. THE LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD HOME - DAY

Abe (*exactly as he was in the portrait*) comes to life as he OPENS a letter. Unfolds it; reads it for a BEAT -- his face growing more concerned with each line.

THOMAS (V.O.)

*My dear son...I wish I wrote with
happier news.*

SMASH TO:

QUICK CUTS

Of Will Johnson:

-- Struggling against an armed BOUNTY HUNTER who drags him
out of the Lincoln family cabin as Thomas pulls; yells.

ABE (V.O.)

*Will had fallen prey to a Bounty
Hunter -- one of the thousands who
worked their way across the North...*

THOMAS

There's been a MISTAKE!

BOUNTY HUNTER

Says right here -- Will Johnson,
runaway slave. Now out've my way!

He shoves Thomas aside as --

WILL

(struggling)

I'm a free man! I'M A FREE MAN!

-- Will being shepherded onto a steamboat with other SLAVES --
all of them in chains.

ABE (V.O.)

*Rounding up Negroes as they saw
fit...sending them down river to be
sold at auction...*

-- Sitting in the hold of the steamboat -- tears streaming
down his face...

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Father told me to pray for Will...

(beat)

I intended to do more than that.

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI - DAY

While Speed loads a forty-foot flatboat, Abe and Henry (holding a black parasol) have a heated conversation on the dock nearby.

HENRY

The South is dangerous in ways you cannot imagine. The rules are different down there.

ABE

I think I can handle myself. Besides, I have Speed to look after me.

Speed glances over -- a heavy box of cargo in his arms.

SPEED

Feel free to help out anytime.

HENRY

(hushed/Abe)

You have work to do here, Abraham! Work that will save more than one life, I assure you. Or have you forgotten the first rule?

ABE

He's my friend, Henry.

(back to the boat)

I'm sorry, but your errands will just have to wait.

CUT TO:

EXT. A FLATBOAT ON THE MISSISSIPPI - DUSK

Abe stands on the stern, steering the forty-foot vessel through the outskirts of a city. Speed stands beside him -- watching a plantation roll slowly by.

ABE

You seem troubled.

SPEED

Just a bit...nostalgic.

(beat/sincere)

There's something about the South, Lincoln. Something grand; magical. I'd forgotten how it felt.

ABE

Why didn't you stay?

SPEED

What -- and toil away on my father's farm for the rest of my life? No...

(beat)

I wanted to build something. A business; a fortune...a city to rival this...

We COME AROUND TO REVEAL the city in all its glory -- tall ships and flatboats crowding its busy port...

TITLE: **NEW ORLEANS**

EXT. A SLAVE AUCTION - DAY

A crowd has gathered in the middle of the street -- around a makeshift stage decorated with red, white and blue bunting.

Abe and Speed approach the back of the mob as an AUCTIONEER steps front and center.

He motions to the side of the platform where --

WILL

is led up -- his wrists and feet shackled.

ABE (V.O.)

The theater of it all...men, women, children -- inspected and prodded as cattle...

As the auctioneer pries his mouth open, showing off his teeth, Will spots Abe in the crowd. His eyes go wide, but --

-- Abe is quick to gesture: *Shhhhh...*

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Made to stand half-naked before strangers. Strangers whose whims tore husbands from their wives...sisters from brothers...mothers from sons...

SPEED

(in Abe's ear)

Let me handle the bidding. I watched my father do this a thousand times.

AUCTIONEER
Do I hear \$300 to start?

Speed raises his hand.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
(acknowledging)
\$300! Do I hear four?

Another BIDDER gestures -- a slender, grey-whiskered man. He stands in back in a black coat and shirt.

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
\$400!

He and Speed fight it out: \$500, \$600, \$700, *until* --

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
(re: Speed's raised hand)
\$800
(re: the other bidder)
And there's \$900...

Speed RAISES HIS HAND AGAIN: he'll go to \$1000. But --

AUCTIONEER (CONT'D)
\$900! Going once...twice...

Waving his hand and jumping, the Auctioneer *clearly* ignoring him --

SPEED
(desperate/loud)
\$1000 here, sir!

The Auctioneer shares a *knowing glance* with the other bidder...the *same* glance Barts and his farmhand once shared.

AUCTIONEER
SOLD! For \$900 to the man in back!

Speed spits in disgust; Abe's eyes narrow. As Will is dragged off to meet his new master --

WILL
Abe! AAAAABE!!!

Abe reaches for the ax handle under his coat, but *stops*.

ABE (V.O.)
*I couldn't attack. Not here...not with
 so many witnesses.*

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI - SUNSET

Abe and Speed creep through the woods, following a chain gang of TEN SLAVES (including Will) on the road -- the last breath of orange sky glittering off their shackled, bare feet.

SLAVES
 (singing)
*Who those children dressed in Red?
 God's gonna trouble the water. Must be
 the ones that Moses led. God's gonna
 trouble the water...*

The grey-whiskered master rides point on horseback, while an OVERSEER brings up the rear -- a rifle across his saddle.

EXT. A GRAND PLANTATION HOUSE - DUSK

The slaves are led toward the plantation's grand main house, dread on their faces. But as we GROW CLOSER...

Lamp light and MUSIC pour from its every window. There seems to be a party going on inside.

A GRAND BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Filled with festivity: scores of FELLOW SLAVES clad in fine silk; dancing with WHITE MEN AND WOMEN in equally-fine attire. Marble, crystal and gold -- ruled by a breathtaking staircase that would be at home in the Paris Opera House.

SLAVE MUSICIANS

in tuxedos play an up-tempo WALTZ in the corner.

The new arrivals are marched past a long, elegantly-set table covered in food, sweets and spirits.

Have we died and gone to some kind of slave Heaven?

The newly-arrived slaves are taken in hand by white dance partners and led to the center of the ballroom floor. As they begin to dance...

OUTSIDE - SAME

Abe and Speed lurk near a horse corral, the occasional WHINNY or SNORT as they watch through the ballroom's tall windows -- *completely baffled* by what they see.

BUTLER (O.S.)
Mr. Lincoln?

Startled, Abe and Speed turn and find themselves a few feet from --

AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN BUTLER

decked out in a tuxedo and white gloves. Behind him -- TEN MEAN-LOOKING WHITE MEN.

ABE
How'd you know my --

BUTLER
Would you be kind 'nuff to join us inside, sir.

Abe and Speed share a look -- quizzical.

SPEED
(terrified)
You, uh -- you go ahead. I'm good right here.

IN THE BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Abe is led into the ballroom as the slaves (including Will) dance. He's confused but cautious; hyper-aware.

The Butler motions for Abe to sit at the elegantly-decorated table. Abe does as he's told.

A BEAT as Abe watches the slaves glide around him with their dance partners. Easily the *strangest thing he's ever seen*.

As if on cue, down the staircase comes the most resplendent figure of all: an older, *dashing* man of timeless elegance. The very picture of the Southern Gentleman -- flanked by a personal guard of VAMPIRES. We could easily call him "Rhett Butler..."

...but we'll call him ADAM instead.

ADAM

(walking/Abe)

I'm so pleased you accepted my invitation. My apologies for the theatrics, but I needed something that would convince you to come all this --

ABE

What do you want?

Adam takes a seat directly across from Abe. A BEAT, then --

ADAM

To give you a choice, Mr. Lincoln -- something Henry never has.

Abe tries to hide his surprise at hearing Henry's name.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'll give him this -- he has an eye for talent. You've proven quite effective at destroying our kind.

(beat)

Tell me, has he ever lied to you?

Abe tries to hide *this* reaction, too.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Have you ever wondered why he sends you after the vampires he does? Ever wondered if it's Henry who's hungry for power? Or are you, Mr. Lincoln, merely a slave with a vampire for his master?

ABE

(more forceful)

What do you WANT?

ADAM

To see you liberate yourself; use your gifts for something greater...to see you destroy your oppressor.

(beat)

Or shall I destroy your friend instead?

Abe glances at Will, then runs his fingers over the --

AX

hidden beneath his coat, preparing to strike...

ADAM (CONT'D)
A simple "yes" or "no" will suffice.

Now or never. Abe tries to lunge at Adam, but he's restrained from behind by two vampires. As he struggles --

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'll take that as a "no."

Adam raises a gloved hand in the air, fingers spread, as the slaves dance with their partners -- the world twirling beautifully by.

ABE
(struggling)
You can't do this!

Adam *closes* his fist. Around the room -- eyes go black; glassy, hollow fangs descend.

A slave woman's eyes bulge as fangs CRUNCH through the skin of her neck, sending a shower of blood to the rafters.

An OLDER MALE has his head twisted around, chin-to-spine -- his body convulsing as a vampire tears into his Adam's apple.

Will SCREAMS as the vampire squeezes his throat, trying to bite.

ABE (CONT'D)
NOOOOO!!!

In one swift motion, Abe kicks his chair backward and *flips* over the vampires behind him --

Flipping in SLOW MOTION over their heads -- reaching into his coat and grabbing his ax at the same time!

Three of the chair's legs land on the marble floor -- the forth goes *through the heart of a vampire* who was unlucky enough to be standing directly behind him.

Abe rises to his full height and lets his ax fly.

ONBOARD THE AX HEAD

as it sails gracefully end over end. We're passengers on the Ferris wheel of a rotating blade -- the world spinning before our eyes: floor, ceiling, floor, ceiling, until --

The vampire behind Will suddenly -- WHOOSH! THUMP! -- falls backward with an ax *where his face used to be* as Will drops to the floor, unconscious.

THE SLAVE MUSICIANS

stop playing. *This wasn't part of the plan.* But one CELLIST keeps going -- his SOLO providing the SCORE for the fight:

Abe is the conductor in a *Waltz of Death* -- gracefully cutting down a ballroom full of vampires...beheading them to the BEAT of the music.

Heads and limbs twirling though the air in beautiful SLOW MOTION...

When the other musicians see that Abe is winning -- they join in, *playing with gusto!* The waltz builds in intensity along with Abe's fight, reaching its CRESCENDO as --

Abe destroys another...and another...and *another* -- until only one remains:

ADAM

stands alone in the center of the ballroom; APPLAUDING.

ADAM

Bravo, Mr. Lincoln! You're even better than I'd heard!

ABE

(breathing hard/intense)

You haven't heard the half of it...

Abe lunges at him with his ax, as the slave's music grows *even more intense.*

Abe kicks and spins and swings his blade. There's *clearly* a difference in Adam's skill and power compared to the others. He may *look* older, but he's on another level -- fighting with a superhero's strength and a Kung Fu master's quickness.

SPEED

peeks through the window, scared half to death, but absolutely *riveted* by the action.

Abe and Adam *beating each other senseless* -- Rocky and Apollo in the tenth round. The superhuman pounding (*face!*)

kidneys!) starts to take its toll on Abe, until Adam kicks his ax away and corners him by the long table.

ADAM
(not even sweating)
Sure you don't want to reconsider?

Abe throws another look to --

WILL

who's starting to come around, struggling to lift himself off the floor.

Abe looks down at the table below and sees --

SILVERWARE

neatly laid out. *Silver!* He reaches for the knife, but Adam kicks it away.

Abe grabs the *fork* and stabs Adam with it -- *burning his flesh* as it punctures his skin!

With Adam momentarily stunned, Abe launches into a full-on *fork attack!* Stabbing his enemy again and again!

With the pain too much to bear, Adam decides to fight another day. He runs toward --

OUTSIDE - SAME

Speed watches Adam BURST through the double doors and leap *impossibly* through the air -- into the horse corral and onto a horse's back!

ADAM
YA!

He gallops *through the corral fence* -- SHATTERING it and *releasing a herd of spooked horses.*

Speed's attention turns from Adam to --

ABE

running out the front door with an unconscious Will in his arms. Abe sees Adam racing off on horseback. He turns back to Speed and --

ABE

Take him Speed! Take him and get
out've here!

SPEED

(in awe of Lincoln)
Who the hell are you?

No time to explain. Abe hops the fence into the corral,
mounts a horse, and --

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE OPEN PLAINS - MOMENTS LATER

We're racing along a stampede, flying over Adam's horse as he
kicks its side again and again -- *faster!*

Adam digs his heels in, but it's no use -- Abe's halfway to
him now, riding reckless.

Riding along a cliff face now (the horses are too spooked to
care that they're *dangerously close* to plunging to their
deaths).

Abe pulls his horse alongside, stands --

And *jumps!* He hooks Adam around the neck -- the two wrestling
on horseback as the earth speeds by beneath them. Abe drags
Adam from his saddle, sending them both *tumbling onto the
ground!*

Horses GALLOPING past them on all sides -- both Abe and Adam
dodging left and right, as if they're standing in the middle
of a ten-lane freeway while cars race past them.

Adam starts to *run with the horses* -- using his vampire speed
to his advantage. Like a Parkour master, he jumps off the
side of *one* horse, onto *another*, springing himself onto a
third horse's back!

Abe grabs a passing horse by the neck and *flips himself onto
its back!* The chase is on -- but Abe has fallen behind.
There's only one way to catch up:

Abe jumps from moving horse to moving horse! Leapfrogging;
using his highly-tuned balance to close the gap between he
and Adam. But there's a --

WIDE RAVINE

coming up fast -- a drop to certain death. Adam digs his heel into the horse's flank, headed for the edge. *What the hell is he doing?*

Adam rides his horse right over the side! As the horse falls into the ravine, Adam *springs off of its back* -- jumping the rest of the way across the ravine and landing -- BOOM! -- safely on the other side.

Abe rides even *harder* -- determined to follow Adam across -- but Abe's horse knows better...

As it approaches the edge, the horse rears back -- its hooves SKIDDING to a stop and throwing Abe over its head!

Abe hits the ground -- THUD! -- and rolls toward the drop -- clawing at the dirt to slow himself...

...falling over the side...

...and hanging on for dear life by one hand! His feet dangling over certain death.

With the last of his strength, Abe pulls himself up; gets to his feet...

A BEAT...

He and Adam share a distant stare across the ravine.

WILL (PRE-LAP)
I thought they were just stories...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN (MOVING) - DAY

DESCENDING along the northbound train until we see our trio sitting in the window of a passenger car.

WILL
(deep in a memory)
Till I saw their eyes with my
own...saw those fangs up close...
(beat)
It doesn't make any sense...

Speed notices Abe absentmindedly running a finger over the gash in his chin.

SPEED

You'd better pray Mary is fond of
scars, Lincoln. Though, she did
already marry the ugliest man in
Illinois.

ABE

(a beat, then)
I suppose I could always grow a
beard...

It's an innocent exchange -- but it's enough to get Will
fired up.

WILL

Who the hell cares about your scar?

Now he has their attention.

WILL (CONT'D)

No offense, but I just watched a whole
mess of people die! People I'd gotten
close to! Good people! Now I want to
know why!

As Abe struggles to find an answer...

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE (DINING ROOM) - NIGHT

Abe sits at the dinner table -- a famished traveller about to
enjoy his first decent meal in weeks. Henry stands, making
him a plate.

ABE

Why didn't you tell me?

HENRY

Because...it is irrelevant to our
task.

ABE

First you don't tell me that you're a
vampire; then you don't tell me that
there's a connection between slavery
and your kind...anything else you'd
care to share while we're at it?

HENRY

Your food's getting cold, Abraham.

ABE

If this is true, then our country shall be cursed with vampires so long as it's cursed with slavery. And if that be the case, then our mission is clear:

(beat)

Rid the country of slavery and drive the devils out for good.

HENRY

(calm)

Our "mission" is maintaining balance. I told you -- we're assassins, not saviors.

ABE

And for every errand you send me on; every vampire I destroy -- twenty spring up in their place! Why not salt their fields? Ensure that their evil never takes root in America again?

Calmly, Henry takes Abe's full dinner plate and throws it -- SMASH! -- into the fireplace.

ABE (CONT'D)

What the hell was that for!?

HENRY

What if I told you that was the last meal you would ever have? What if I used all my powers to keep you there in your seat as hunger slowly ate at you? How long until you decided to strike at me? Behead me?

Abe stands up and begins to walk away.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(as Abe leaves)

A good man will do terrible things if you starve him long enough. Imagine what a vampire would do.

(Abe stops)

If you threaten their way of life; if you provoke them...you'll be provoking a war. One that would bring terrible consequences with it, both for you and thousands -- perhaps millions of others.

ABE
They provoked it, Henry. They provoked
it by coming here in the first place.

Henry throws up his arms in frustration.

HENRY
(deeply sarcastic)
Fine. Go, Abraham. Go and declare war.
Go and fight every Southern vampire in
America on your own.

Abe thinks for a strong BEAT, then --

ABE
I won't be fighting them alone...

Off Henry's curious look -- *what does he mean?*

SMASH TO:

A MONTAGE

Of Abe running for president against his Democratic rival
Stephen Douglas:

-- CLOSE on a sign that reads "Lincoln for President!" We
WIDEN TO REVEAL Speed, walking through a crowd with *dozens* of
these:

SPEED
(yelling)
Get your Lincoln photographs!

FURTHER BACK, until we see what the crowd sees: Abe and
Douglas in mid debate on a decorated platform.

ABE
(to the crowd)
It's you -- it's we the People that
can change this country!

-- Abe speaks to a crowd of supporters. Henry stands in the
back; arms folded. There's a look of concern about him. This
isn't what he had in mind.

ABE (CONT'D)
They are the two principles that have
stood face to face from the beginning
of time; and will ever continue to
struggle!

(MORE)

ABE (CONT'D)

One is the common right of humanity
and the other the divine right of
kings!

-- After another rally, Speed walks beside Will with a tray
of Lincoln and Douglas souvenirs.

SPEED

Get your Lincoln and Douglas
souvenirs, ladies and gentlemen!

WILL

You know, there's such a thing as
loyalty, Speed.

SPEED

And there's such a thing as commerce,
Will.

-- Abe and Mary sit up late in a telegraph office, waiting
nervously while the machine CLICKS away -- a TELEGRAPH
OPERATOR and CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS gathered around. Mary
excitedly snatches a note out of the Operator's hand and
reads it. Her growing smile tells us all we need to know...

SMASH TO:

EXT. THE CAPITOL STEPS - 1861 - DAY

TITLE: **LINCOLN'S INAUGURATION -- MARCH 4TH, 1861**

SOARING OVER the tens of thousands who have gathered for
Abe's inauguration. We pass signs that read "Hail President
Lincoln!" and "God Bless Honest Abe!"

ABE (V.O.)

*Publicly, I struck the chords of
harmony. Privately, however, I knew
that our fragile peace was nearing its
breaking point...*

As Abe (now with his iconic beard) speaks to the crowd, Will
stands near the podium, scanning for potential threats while
chomping a cigar. (From here on, he'll serve as a loyal
bodyguard -- never far from the President).

INT. THE CONFEDERATE WHITE HOUSE (RICHMOND, VA) - DAY

The South's own version of The President's Office -- ornate and *far* too large for its three occupants: Adam, Stephen Douglas and the unmistakable soon-to-be Confederate President JEFFERSON DAVIS.

ADAM

(to Douglas)

We have no choice. You failed to win the election -- so we shall have to win a war.

DOUGLAS

You never said anything about a "war!"
Have you any idea how many will die?

Even for Douglas's conscience, it's too much to bear.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

No...no I cannot abide it. I'm sorry gentlemen...

He turns away and exits. A BEAT...

ADAM

And you, Mr. Davis? Do you have the stomach for a fight?

DAVIS

I can rally the living to our cause.
But we're still at a disadvantage.
We'll support you...but you need to support us.

Off Adam's reassuring look --

CUT TO:

EXT. FORT SUMTER - NIGHT

TITLE: **FORT SUMTER, SOUTH CAROLINA**

From its land-based position, a Confederate cannon FIRES the first shot of the war, at the Union fort that lies on an island in the middle of Charleston Harbor.

A CANNON BALL

soars over the glimmering water...down into the fort, toward the unsuspecting UNION SOLDIER.

INT. WHITE HOUSE (EXECUTIVE OFFICE) - DAY

Abe is reading a newspaper at his desk as Will stands nearby, the giant black headline "WAR BEGINS!" splashed across its front page. We MOVE over his shoulder as he reads -- CLOSER to a smaller story below the fold:

"STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS FOUND DEAD"

WILL
(re: the headline)
We have to be careful, Abe...

SMASH TO:

A MONTAGE

Of the Union losing battle after battle, INTERCUT with Abe addressing a joint session of Congress:

-- From a podium beneath the still-unfinished Capitol Dome, Abe speaks to both assembled Houses of Congress -- SENATORS and REPRESENTATIVES at their desks, the gallery stuffed to capacity above.

ABE
We keep saying this is a war for
"freedom." But whose "freedom" do we
mean?

-- The Battle of Bull Run: *The CONFEDERATE VAMPIRE SOLDIERS getting close...* But even as the Union bullets strike them in their chests, they keep coming.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The mother whose infant is ripped from
her arms when she's sold to another
owner? The old man working the fields
till he falls over dead?

-- The Battle of Fredericksburg: *Getting closer...* Union soldiers drop to one knee and FIRE -- but the REBELS run right through the bullets as if they haven't been hit at all!

UNION SOLDIER #1
(reloading)
Are we hitting them?!?

UNION SOLDIER #2
We're hitting them! Why the hell
aren't they dying?!?

-- The Battle of Chancellorsville: *Right on top of them!*
 Union soldiers are torn limb from limb! Heads twisted; arms
ripped off; throats slashed.

-- Back in Congress...

ABE

Will their lives be any different if
 we win this war? Will they be able to
 taste the "freedom" we'll have won?

(beat)

If this war is a stand against evil,
 then let it stand for something.

-- An OFFICIAL reads from a large scroll to a crowd on a
 Washington street:

OFFICIAL

"All persons held as slaves shall be
 then, thenceforward, and forever
 free."

-- A MOB OF SLAVES kicks a barn door in, surprising the TWO
 GENTLEMEN VAMPIRES who were feeding on a YOUNG WOMAN inside.

ABE (V.O.)

*News of emancipation tore through the
 South...and slaves fled north by the
 thousands on the Underground
 Railroad...*

As the mob attacks and violently beats the vampires...

-- A regiment of BLACK SOLDIERS (the 54th Massachusetts)
 charges into battle wearing Union blue.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Yet it wasn't enough...

-- A VAMPIRE SOLDIER charges a gun battery, lifts one of the
cannons and uses it to crush several Union men.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE SOUTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Speed hurries Will through the foyer, leading him past WILLIE
 LINCOLN (9) who is sitting on the marble floor -- engrossed
 in his toy soldiers.

SPEED

When he was running for President I
imagined opportunities! But war? War
is bad for business! I'm losing money
hand over fist!

WILL

Don't think of it as losing money --
think of it as investing in your
country's future.

As they disappear through the doors and into the cold winter
air, we WIDEN TO REVEAL:

A VAMPIRE ASSASSIN

lurking nearby; watching them. With Speed and Will gone, he
steps toward:

Willie...who now plays alone.

ASSASSIN

Hello, Willie.

Willie looks up from his toys -- into his own REFLECTION: in
the dark glasses of the smiling man standing over him.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE (RESIDENCE) - DAY

Abe and Mary sit next to Willie's bed. Mary places a compress
on his forehead as Willie suffers through delusions and
fever.

MARY

The doctor says he's never seen
anything like it -- says he has no
idea what it is...

Abe doesn't *dare* tell her.

ABE (V.O.)

I knew exactly what it was...

INT. WHITE HOUSE (RESIDENCE) - NIGHT

Abe sits in a rocking chair holding Willie's limp body
against his chest. Mary sits on the bed, weeping.

ABE (V.O.)

*The same fever; delusions. I was a boy
again -- watching my mother suffer the
same inescapable fate.*

ABE (CONT'D)

Live, baby boy...live...

EXT. WHITE HOUSE (SOUTH PORTICO) - DAWN

Abe sits alone on the balcony, exhausted and stone-faced --
watching the sun come up.

WILL (O.S.)

Abe...

Will is standing behind him in the doorway.

WILL (CONT'D)

It's dangerous out here -- come on
inside.

ABE

(staring out)

It's just as dangerous inside...

(beat)

Who let them in, Will?

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - DAY

WILLIE'S BODY

rests peacefully atop a slab of ice; dressed for burial. Abe
looks down at his peaceful face; tears in his eyes -- Henry
standing behind him.

HENRY

I told you there would be
consequences.

ABE

Why didn't they take me?

Tears running down his cheeks; his head hung low.

HENRY

Because they know that this is a fate
worse than death.

ABE

Mary is inconsolable...says -- says
she doesn't want to go on without him.

Henry sits in silence. *Should he say it?*

HENRY

There is...another way.

Abe lifts his head; turns.

HENRY (CONT'D)

The older of us, we can...restore the
dead -- provided the body is whole;
provided little time has passed.

Abe is *astonished* -- hope creeping into his eyes.

HENRY (CONT'D)

But Abraham...he would be as I am. A
killer.

Abe looks down at Willie and begins to weep anew.

MARY (O.S.)

Do it...

MARY

stands in the doorway; exhausted. Her eyes red. *How long has
she been listening?*

ABE

Mary...

MARY

Do it.

Abe and Henry are astonished. *How does she --*

MARY (CONT'D)

The journal...the one you always left
in your coat pocket. I know I
shouldn't have, Abe. I never said a
word because I...I believed in what
you were doing. In what both of you
were doing. But this...

(Henry)

If what you say is true, then I beg
you...give us our little boy back.

The words "little boy" bring the tears again. Henry looks to Abe -- caught in a husband and wife's darkest moment.

ABE
(a beat, then)
I'm sorry, Mary...I can't.

MARY
You have to!

ABE
He wouldn't be our little boy,
Mary...he'd be something else.

MARY
YOU! You brought this on him!

Abe tries to cradle her as she weeps. She POUNDS him with her fists -- fights him off. But he persists until she collapses into his grasp; her body shaking through the tears.

Henry steps behind Abe; puts a hand on his shoulder.

HENRY
Let me go to them -- make a deal. It's
time you had peace, Abraham. It's time
to stop fighting.

On Abe, considering this --

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE (RESIDENCE) - NIGHT

Abe and Mary eat a painfully quiet supper, otherwise alone.
We've never seen either of them this tired; this low.

Abe begins to take a bite, but stops when --

MARY
You have to win this war...

A BEAT; Abe lowers his fork.

ABE
How can I win a war when I can't even
protect my family? When the
Confederates seem to know everything
we do before we do it.
(beat)
(MORE)

ABE (CONT'D)
 'The fact is, you're the only one I can
 trust anymore, Mary. This isn't just
 any war...we're fighting an enemy that
 doesn't fall when bullets strike them.

He begins to take that bite again, but *stops* before the fork
 reaches his lips.

CLOSER to the fork in his hand...

CLOSER to Abe's face as *an idea begins to form...*

ABE (CONT'D)
 (a beat, then)
 Mary...I'm going to need your help...

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE (EXECUTIVE OFFICE) - DAY

Abe sits at the head of the table, outlining a plan to Speed,
 Will and Henry (who looks on from the corner, clearly
 displeased).

SPEED
 SILVER?

ABE
 Keep your voice down!
 (beat/quieter)
 Now, there's a reason I'm only telling
 the three of you. Given the fact that
 the Confederates seem to know our
 every move, we don't know who we can
 trust with this.

SPEED
 Fine, but silver?

ABE
 Why not? It's the one thing they can't
 defend against. We'll make silver
 bullets; bayonets; cannonballs...

SPEED
 Do you have any idea how much that'll
 cost?

WILL
 (Speed)
 Do you ever stop thinking about money?

SPEED

Fine! Forget money -- where the hell
are you going to find that much
silver?

ABE

Let me worry about that...

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE

Of silver being collected and processed:

-- SOLDIERS leaving upscale houses with canvas bags of
confiscated items; ANGRY RESIDENTS following them onto the
street, shouting their displeasure...

-- Those soldiers LOADING the bags onto wagons...

-- Those wagons arriving outside a brick building -- its
massive chimney belching smoke...

-- Abe meeting privately with Mary in the residence,
explaining his plan. When he's finished...

MARY

You want me to do what?

-- Mary meeting with an astonished BLACK WOMAN in her modest
home. She has a distinct look -- a face we'll remember. As
Mary sits with her -- *pitching* her an idea...

-- Abe looks down onto a factory floor -- his face lit by the
deep orange glow of molten silver. Jewelry, teapots, even
forks and knives being melted down and poured into molds...

ABE (V.O.)

*Lesson number one: what we do, we do
not for ourselves...not for one man --
but for the good of all mankind...*

-- Mary meeting with the same Black Woman -- only this time
the room is *filled* with other BLACK MEN AND WOMEN. On Mary,
leading a discussion...

SMASH TO:

EXT. HIGH ABOVE GETTYSBURG - DAY

TITLE: **GETTYSBURG**

SOARING OVER the landscape -- nothing but patches of lush grass, cornfields and thick woods. But as we crest a hill, a *massive battle* comes into view on the field below.

DOWN toward CRACKING musket fire and POUNDING cannons...

The panicked Union retreat *smashes* into a cattle fence. Men are crushed to death against its wooden rails.

Chaos. Confederates SHOOTING trapped men like fish in a barrel -- each MUSKET SHOT becoming a CLICK as we...

SMASH TO:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE (TELEGRAPH OFFICE) - NIGHT

PULL FROM a CLICKING telegraph to REVEAL Abe, Speed, Will and a UNION GENERAL crowded around a young TELEGRAPH OPERATOR. The General reads the latest dispatch -- *grim*.

GENERAL

Mr. President, I think it's time we talked about a plan to evacuate.

WILL

Evacuate Washington?

GENERAL

The first day of Gettysburg was a disaster. I don't think the army will survive another.

SPEED

We could run the war from New York. Boston, if need be.

ABE

(sarcasm)

Why not run it from Paris?

(beat)

You're certain no relief will reach Gettysburg in time?

The General's face says it all. SILENCE blankets the room. CLICK...CLICK-CLICK...

ABE (CONT'D)

General, prepare the city for evacuation. Will, Speed -- come with me...

EXT. RAIL DEPOT - NIGHT

Abe stands with Will and Speed before the giant steel door of a long building. UNION SOLDIERS stand ready for his command.

From inside -- beyond the doors -- we hear a massive HISS OF SMOKE and a heavy, powerful, mechanical GRUMBLING.

ABE

Well men...if this doesn't work, I'll
see you in Paris.

Abe signals the Soldiers, who release a series of pulleys -- slowly opening the gigantic door, and revealing --

A GLEAMING STEAM TRAIN

Being loaded with cargo -- STEAM hissing from its brakes as it lies dormant.

ABE (CONT'D)

We've only collected a fraction of the
silver I'd hoped, but it'll have to
do...

As Will and Speed marvel at it --

ABE (CONT'D)

Gettysburg, friends...Gettysburg shall
decide whether this world belongs to
the living, or the dead...

The magnificent train BELLOWS powerfully behind Abe, as he casts a distant glance down the track -- to the final battle.

INT. WHITE HOUSE (EXECUTIVE OFFICE) - EVENING

Abe stands in front of the FIREPLACE, winding an old clock that sits on the mantle. He checks his silver pocket watch for reference, until --

HENRY (O.S.)

You've doomed us...

Abe looks in the watch's mirror and sees --

HENRY'S CLOTHES

seated by themselves in a dark corner; a whisky bottle floating in mid-air.

HENRY (CONT'D)
You and your ideology...your
"Emancipation."

Abe turns around and finds the *real* Henry -- shit-faced in a way we haven't seen before.

HENRY (CONT'D)
And now your "train." You've upset the balance I've worked centuries to preserve, and you don't even trust me enough to summon me when enacting your "secret plan!"

ABE
You're one to speak of "balance." Look at you -- a drunken mess.

HENRY
(suddenly enraged)
You insult me?!? After all I've given you?!? You may be my best student, Abraham -- but you're still my student!

An odd statement coming from someone who, at this point, looks young enough to be the 52-year-old President's son.

ABE
The whole of my life's been spent on your errands! Your enemies! And to what end? To what happiness of my own?

HENRY
You speak as if you've lived the years I've lived! Seen the things I've seen! You're an infant! I lost a life to vampires! A chance at salvation!

ABE
And I lost a son, Henry! A mother! But I endure! I fight! What do you do? Cry into a bottle! Cradle whores with one arm while painting your beloved wife with the other!

Henry vamps out and clutches Abe by the throat, SLAMMING him against the mantle.

HENRY
YOU DARE SPEAK OF HER?!?

Henry grabs him and presses his fangs to his neck -- hard enough to draw blood.

But Henry releases him -- just as Speed and Will rush in, drawn by the commotion. Confronted by the sight of Abe in Henry's clutches, both draw their weapons.

WILL

Get away from him!

HENRY

(a beat, to Abe)

I've tried to keep it from this. But you've ruined it...

Abe is suddenly struck by a chilling thought...

ABE

You've been there for all of it...the secret meetings...the generals...

Abe is struck by the full weight of the realization...his whole world collapsing...

ABE (CONT'D)

You. You're the reason they know what we're going to do at every turn. You're the one who's telling them...

HENRY

(sinister)

You have no idea, Abraham...

Abe turns and grabs the ax mounted over his mantle, but when he turns back -- Henry is gone. Speed and Will stare back at him, blankly...

ABE

(a beat, then)

If he knows about our plan, then they do. We have to get on that train and protect it.

CUT TO:

EXT. A FARMHOUSE NEAR GETTYSBURG - NIGHT

Adam is surround by a group of VAMPIRES as he looks out at the seemingly endless Union Camp in the distance. It looks like hundreds of tiny campfires covering the earth in stars.

ADAM

This war ends tonight! Come, friends --
we have a train to catch...

SMASH TO:

QUICK CUTS

Of Abe, Speed and Will chasing the train on horseback,
INTERCUT with Adam and his companions doing the same -- the
tension building as we wonder *who will reach it first*:

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH ABOVE A TRAIN - NIGHT

As it CHUGS along a moonlit wooded mountainside.

UNION GUARDS are posted up and down its length -- some
stationed in the boxcars; others in the spaces between them.
Everything about this rolling fortress says *stay away*.

IN A BOXCAR - SAME

MOVING THROUGH the cargo -- tightly-packed crates and boxes
(we can safely assume they're full of silver weapons and
ammo).

Two GUARDS share a smoke in this car; rifles slung.

GUARD #1

First they keep us waiting in a train
yard for two weeks, then they issue us
silver bullets...Christ, it's no
wonder we're losing this war.

GUARD #2

Can you keep a secret?
(leans in)
I melted all mine down; sold 'em. Lead
shoots just as straight as silver,
right?

Their conversation is interrupted by a THUD that SHAKES the
entire car side to side.

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)

What the --

Another THUD. They grab their rifles, as --

HIGH ABOVE THE TRAIN - SAME

As if they've been waiting for us, DOZENS OF VAMPIRES descend from the treetops high above -- some falling hundreds of feet onto the roofs below. Each -- THUD! -- SHAKING the cars.

IN THE STEAM ENGINE - SAME

The train's ENGINEER is joined by a UNION COLONEL in the glow of the furnace. When a THUD rattles the train behind them --

ENGINEER
Holy SHIT!

He reaches for the brake, but the colonel grabs his hand.

COLONEL
I have my orders. We stop for nothing.

They're both too distracted to notice --

THE VAMPIRE

snaking silently over the coal car behind them...

ABOVE THE TRAIN - SAME

Vampires creep spider-like along the tops of cars, silently killing guards as they move forward.

IN A BOXCAR - SAME

Our two smoking soldiers watch shadows move across the planks above. Waiting...waiting...CRASH!

THREE VAMPIRES burst through the door at the end of the car -- demon-faced. They charge our terrified guards, who FIRE their rifles in a panic!

The guard with the silver bullets is able to fend off two of them with his RIFLE. The guard who melted and sold his? Dead.

FLYING ALONG THE TRAIN - SAME

Their GUNSHOTS alert the others. GUARDS go on high alert up and down the train -- readying their weapons.

IN THE LOCOMOTIVE - MOMENTS LATER

The Engineer and Colonel are *extremely* dead; the cab soaked with their blood. The Vampire grabs the brake/throttle lever and SNAPS it off.

BEHIND THE TRAIN -- SAME

From out of the night come three HORSEMEN -- an all-out gallop as they ride onto the tracks. At first we think it's Abe, Speed and Will...

But CLOSER, we see *Adam* -- joined by two VAMPIRE RIDERS.

AS they race toward the back of the train, closing in --

THE CABOOSE'S REAR DOOR

suddenly FLINGS open, and streaking MACHINE GUN FIRE comes shooting out of it!

ABE

aims a *Gatling Gun* mounted to the rear, while Will cranks the handle that turns its barrel.

One of Adam's escorts is hit -- the bullet entering then *searing* his flesh as he falls off his horse and onto the tracks. Adam and the other rider peel off into the night -- gone for now.

ON TOP OF THE TRAIN -- MOMENTS LATER

Abe, Speed and Will scale a ladder and begin to fight their way forward -- the smoke from the locomotive making it difficult to see at times:

-- Will's cigar never moves as he wields dual revolvers with athletic grace -- firing silver bullets into the foreheads of the damned, then watching them die excruciating deaths as their brains melt in their heads.

-- Abe uses every tool in his arsenal, fighting off two and three vampires at a time: blinding them with flares; using Kung Fu in close-quarters; both ends of his ax.

-- The Union soldiers who haven't been torn to shreds either jump off the train in fear, or get thrown off by vampires.

-- The dozen who first attacked are whittled down to --

ONE LAST VAMPIRE

who grabs Abe and puts him in a headlock -- fangs out.

It's about to bite when -- BANG! -- its neck *snaps backward* and it falls off the train. *Dead*. Abe looks up at --

WILL

a few feet away; smoking pistol in hand.

ABE
(feeling his throat)
You saved my life...

WILL
Once more and we're even...

As Abe and Will share a smile --

A GUNSHOT rings out.

Will's expression changes ever so slightly.

ABE
Will?

Will looks down at his belly as blood begins to pool on his shirt -- *drops to his knees*. Abe turns and finds himself staring down the barrel of --

SPEED'S PISTOL

trembling; held by his old friend -- who's clearly torn about what he's doing.

ABE (CONT'D)
Speed?

Will (on his knees, shaking) looks down at his revolver -- all six chambers are empty.

ABE (CONT'D)
Speed what are you doing?

SPEED
I'm sorry, Lincoln. I never wanted it
to come to this...

As it all begins to come together...

ABE

How did they get you to betray your
closest friends? Huh? What was your
price?

SPEED

They offered me a chance at a life
after you lose this war...

(beat)

That and half the silver aboard.

Abe almost smiles at the obvious...

ABE

"And into the hands of Judas were
placed thirty coins of silver..."

SPEED

Lincoln, I...I never wanted them to
hurt your boy...

(breaking)

I'm sorry...

THE WORLD SLOWS as Will *leaps to his feet* and Speed *pulls the trigger* -- the gun pointed at Abe.

THE BULLET

leaves Speed's barrel, flying toward the President, as Will
dives in front of Abe. The bullet strikes Will in the chest
as he flies through the air, *and falls off the side of the train.*

Gone.

ABE

WIIIIILL!

Before Speed can fire again, Abe flips his ax around and
SHOOTS him, the force sending Speed off his feet and onto the
tracks.

And just like that, his two oldest, closest friends in the
world are *gone.*

ON THE TRACKS - SAME

The bodies of Speed and Will have come to rest near each
other on the tracks -- looking at each other with their
lifeless, open eyes...

ON TOP OF THE TRAIN (MOVING) - SAME

There's no time for Abe's shock -- not yet. He senses a *strange light* growing behind him. He turns, facing front as the train rounds a corner, and sees --

A BURNING RAIL BRIDGE

in the distance -- a bridge that spans a huge drop to the rushing waters of a river below. Suddenly it *all comes together*. Abe runs forward -- intent on stopping the train before it plummets to its doom.

CUT TO:

IN THE STEAM ENGINE - MOMENTS LATER

Abe reaches the engine with every intent of stopping the train, but finds --

ADAM

instead -- beheld in all his dark glory: dashing, relaxed and sitting at the controls as the train *races* toward the end.

ADAM

It's true what they say...if you want something done right...

Adam leaps at him -- an *impossible* leap that knocks Abe onto the pile of coal behind the locomotive.

Abe springs to his feet and fights back with the ax -- the world's most-powerful vampire against the world's most powerful vampire hunter.

But Abe is older; slower than when they last met -- and Adam is, quite frankly, *kicking his ass* down the length of the train. Abe can barely stand his ground.

Before the fight has really even begun, Abe finds himself on his back -- Adam holding his ax with one hand, and holding Abe *over the side of a boxcar* with the other -- pressing his head closer to the tracks racing by below!

Adam squeezes his throat. As Abe GASPS for air -- his face about to be ripped off --

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's a shame, Mr. Lincoln...you could've led a peaceful life if you'd simply done as I asked. If you'd simply been my errand boy instead of his. I'll just have to wait for another gifted human to come along and destroy him for me.

Abe's cheek is *almost scraping the ground...*

ABE

(struggling)

I thought you...believed in doing things...yourself...

Adam LAUGHS, then --

ADAM

My God, didn't Henry ever tell you?

(beat)

Vampires can't kill vampires.

HENRY (O.S.)

No...

HENRY STURGES

stands in the boxcar above -- heroic.

HENRY (CONT'D)

But they can beat the shit out of them...

Henry vamps out and yanks Adam backward -- taking Abe along for the ride! Abe is tossed aside as the vampires begin a *physics-defying Battle Royale*.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(fighting)

Go, Abraham! Stop the train!

Abe snaps to it -- picking up his ax and racing forward as Henry and Adam fight -- two super beings who *can't kill each other*.

Henry sends Adam CRASHING through the train's roof and into a boxcar.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 You took her from me...you took
 everything from me. You...you made me
this. You made me a monster...

As Adam pushes Henry off --

INTERCUT WITH:

IN THE LOCOMOTIVE - MOMENTS LATER

Abe reaches the engine, but finds the brake/throttle lever
snapped off -- the bridge racing towards him in a hurry...

Meanwhile, Henry and Adam battle it out inside the boxcar --
 their ferocity and power SHREDDING it around them.

ADAM
 (fighting)
 I made you a god.

HENRY
 300 years I've suffered...

ADAM
 I've waited millennia to bring our
 kind into the light.

Adam's superior power is taking its toll on Henry, despite
 his rage.

Back in the locomotive, Abe sticks his ax into the broken
 brake/throttle -- trying *desperately* to control the train.

But when he sees the burning bridge give way and the track
 fall into the river below, Abe realizes it's too late.

He has no choice but to *jump off the side of the train as the
 engine plummets over the edge!*

Adam hangs on as the entire boxcar tilts to one side, and --

A CRATE OF BAYONETS

shoots open -- launching its contents through the air with
 lethal speed, and pinning him to the wall!

Adam SCREAMS -- crucified by a dozen gleaming blades!

But Henry is still trapped with him in a plummeting train --
 the wreckage closing in around him.

ABE

lifts his head out of the dirt just in time to watch the last of the train *disappear over the side*.

Abe stands, disheartened as the wreckage tumbles into the depths, taking the rest of the bridge with it.

He looks down as the last of the train sinks into the depths far below his feet -- gone forever.

If there's ever been a BEAT of silent despair...this is it.

Abe's attention turns to something small flying toward him from the wreckage -- leaping up from the fiery depths in a single bound and THUMPING down on two feet in front of him!

ADAM

his body is riddled with *already-healing wounds*. A single gleaming bayonet still sticking out of his belly...

...and Abe's ax in his grasp.

As he *pulls the bayonet out* -- black blood dripping off...

ADAM (CONT'D)

You've lost, Mr. Lincoln. Your silver will never reach Gettysburg.

No more time to chat -- Adam raises Abe's ax and brings it down on his head. As he does, Abe falls onto his back -- catching the handle and stopping the silver blade just above his face.

ABE

(pushing back)

Ask yourself...if that bayonet is silver, why aren't you dead?

As puzzlement spreads over Adam's face, Abe pulls the handle's hidden trigger and -- BOOM! -- *blows his head clean off!*

The headless body falls to its knees. A BEAT as Abe gets to his feet, taking in the sight...

HENRY (O.S.)

He was right...

Abe turns and finds --

HENRY

kneeling at the edge of the cliff, having presumably climbed back up. He's dusty and torn...but in one piece.

ABE

We won, Henry...

HENRY

But...without silver your troops are doomed.

ABE

(a beat, then)

Rule number two: "there are things one must keep to one's self."

Henry is *deeply* confused...

ABE (CONT'D)

(a wry smile)

I sent it on a different Railroad...

CUT TO:

EXT. A WOODED TRAIL NEAR GETTYSBURG - NIGHT

A group of FREE BLACK MEN AND WOMEN march in line -- some carrying sacks of silver ammunition on their backs; others helping to carry crates of silver cannonballs.

This procession is led by two women: one is the black woman we saw Mary meeting with earlier -- a woman history knows as HARRIET TUBMAN. The other is *Mary Lincoln herself*, wearing a head scarf to disguise her identity...

EXT. THE UNION CAMP - SUNRISE

As UNION SOLDIERS wait in line, Mary Lincoln and Harriet Tubman oversee the unloading and distribution of the silver weapons.

ABE (V.O.)

Four score and seven years ago...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GETTYSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

Thousands have come to hear Abe speak at the dedication of a new memorial to the fallen.

ABE

Our fathers brought forth on this
continent a new nation, conceived in
liberty, and dedicated to the
proposition that all men are created
equal...

EXT. A CONFEDERATE TRENCH (GETTYSBURG) - DAY

FLYING THROUGH as rebels scurry; bullets WHIZZING by above. A
shell EXPLODES overhead and we SLOW DOWN -- every silver
piece of fork, spoon and knife shrapnel visible as it tears
through them.

ABE (V.O.)

Now we are engaged in a great civil
war, testing whether that nation, or
any nation, so conceived and
dedicated, can long endure.

EXT. LITTLE ROUND TOP (GETTYSBURG) - DAY

Soldiers fight face-to-face -- wrestling and stabbing each
other as the dead lay in pools of maroon below.

Suddenly -- on command -- the Union Infantrymen *fall back*.
Rebels cheer and charge, until they see:

THE UNION SILVER BRIGADE

Marching to the fore in lockstep, each with a gleaming,
shoulder-slung cannon -- fuses lit and BURNING...

ABE (V.O.)

*It is for us, the living, to be
dedicated here to the unfinished work
which they who fought here so nobly
advanced...*

CLOSE ON: The end of barrel as it FIRES. TIME SLOWS as --

A SILVER CANNONBALL

emerges from the dark barrel, its mirrored surface reflecting
the entire battlefield in FISH-EYED GLORY:

-- INSIDE THE BARREL: the black, circular reflection of the
cannon stock growing smaller as the ball flies away...

-- CONFEDERATE VAMPIRES: whose quick reflexes only allow them
to see their destruction hurtling toward them...

-- The cannonball's reflective view *closing in...and in* on a vampire's terrified face...

-- The ball is suddenly *bathed in vampire blood* -- which flies off as the flight continues into the face of *another* SCREAMING VAMP.

EXT. A DUSTY ROAD (GETTYSBURG) - DAY

CONFEDERATE PRISONERS are marched past their fallen comrades.

ABE (V.O.)
That this nation, under God, shall
have a new birth of freedom...

Among the dead...

A DECOMPOSING YOUNG REBEL

the skin around his mouth rotting; fangs visible beneath. We move CLOSER, until we can make out the silver bullet *lodged in his skull*.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And that government of the people, by
the people...

EXT. GETTYSBURG NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

Abe concludes...

ABE
...for the people, shall not perish
from the earth.

He returns to his seat as the crowd APPLAUDS. He pulls a crumpled, half-smoked old cigar from his coat pocket and LIGHTS it -- to the surprise of his fellow speakers.

Abe notes their somewhat scornful looks, and smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

TITLE: **APRIL 14, 1865**

Hundreds have gathered on the South Lawn for a glimpse of their victorious president.

Shouts of "Speech!" and "Give us Abe!"

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE (EXECUTIVE OFFICE) - SAME

The muffled SHOUTS can be heard through the windows as Abe sits at the empty Cabinet table. Alone, except for --

HENRY

Our enemies have begun their exodus -- some back to Europe, some to South America and the Orient. They've seen that America shall forever be a nation of living men...a nation of free men.

A CHANT of "*Lincoln! Lincoln!*" growing outside. Abe sighs.

ABE

Well...I suppose they want to have a look at this old fool.

HENRY

They want to hear from the man who saved their nation.

Abe stands. He's noticeably older; weaker -- as if years of stress and loss have suddenly come crashing down on him. Before he reaches the balcony doors...

HENRY (CONT'D)

We make a rather good team, you and I. One can't help but think of all the good we could do if there were more time...limitless time.

ABE

Yes, well..."time waits for no man."

HENRY

It waits for me, Abraham. Let me make you immortal! Let us fight through the ages, side by side!

Abe reaches into his pocket and holds out--

THE JOURNAL

worn and full of memories. He walks back and hands it to Henry.

ABE

Vampires aren't the only things that live forever...

Henry smiles as Abe turns back to the door.

HENRY
Abraham?
(Abe turns back)
She'd be proud.

He holds there a BEAT...

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Wild cheering goes up as Abe steps out onto a second floor balcony and waves. Mary's waiting for him, and takes his hand; kisses his cheek as they both wave to their admirers. FIREWORKS in the sky overhead.

We TILT UP until they fill the frame -- glorious; vibrant.

CUT TO:

EXT. A WASHINGTON STREET - NIGHT

We TILT down off the *same* fireworks, and find Henry walking over the cobblestones, the journal in his hand, reading.

He walks past Ford's Theatre as JOHN WILKES BOOTH limps out and jumps onto a waiting horse.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
The President's been shot!

But Henry doesn't stop walking, for he is no longer connected to this time. In fact, all he cares about are the words in front of him...

ABE (V.O.)
History prefers legends to men...

TRANSITION TO:

A WALK THROUGH TIME

As Henry walks along, the sun begins to rise, *unnaturally fast...*

ABE (V.O.)
*It prefers nobility to brutality;
soaring speeches to quiet deeds...*

We STAY WITH HENRY -- never losing sight of him as the sun grows higher in the sky, and the buildings seem to *change around him...*

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*History remembers the battle...and
 forgets the blood.*

MOVING AROUND HIM as carriages are replaced by cars; gas lights by traffic lights...

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*However history remembers me, if it
 does at all, it shall only remember a
 fraction of the truth...*

MOVING AROUND HIM even as *Henry himself* seems to change before our very eyes...and we find him standing at the base of --

EXT. THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL - 1965 - DAY

TITLE: **100 YEARS LATER**

All of Washington glistens in the noonday sun -- stately and timeless; monuments to great men and terrible events.

TOURISTS climbs the steps, enjoying a beautiful summer day.

As we finish MOVING AROUND Henry, we find him with a Nikon around his neck -- his shaggy hair and clothing in keeping with the times; a black cowboy hat shielding him from the sun; Ray Bans covering his eyes.

He SNAPS a picture, then continues up the steep incline, into the welcome shade of the Memorial.

ABE (V.O.)
*For whatever else I am: a husband; a
 lawyer; a President...*

Henry weaves through the other TOURISTS, toward the giant stone likeness of his old friend.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*I shall always think of myself, first
 and foremost, as an assassin.*

At its feet, he reaches for something in his pocket and lays it -- solemnly -- at the base of the statue.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Ensuring that darkness remains in the
shadows, where it belongs...*

We FLOAT DOWN toward Henry's offering as he backs away.
CLOSER -- *it's the first yellowed page of Abe's journal.*

*"We merely pass to dust,
but our words and deeds live forever..."*

Henry takes one more PICTURE, then returns the way he came.

ABE (CONT'D)
*Ensuring that this world shall have a
new birth of freedom...*

As he descends the stairs, he's joined by a TALLER FIGURE.
One who's been waiting for him -- away from the prying eyes
of the crowd.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*...and that man shall not perish from
the earth.*

They disappear into the modern world, side-by-side.

It probably isn't...

...but it could be.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END