

STAMPEDE

Draft #1

Written by

Sontenish Myers

OVER BLACK:

Subtle sounds of the morning quiet. Crickets chirping.

TITLE CARD: **GEORGIA, USA, 1802**

1 EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - MORNING

1

Just before dawn. Everything is still. Fog hovers over a large cotton field. The field seems to go on forever until we arrive at an impressive home, the Big House, with a large porch facing a tall oak tree.

Rows of small wooden cabins. Subtle sounds of slaves asleep. Light snoring. A toss or turn. We arrive at the window of one cabin in particular.

2 INT. SLAVE CABIN - NIGHT

2

We push in to the window. A white fabric, a curtain perhaps, falls into frame.

We find GRACE (30, dark skinned), asleep.

THUMP.

Grace slowly opens her eyes; they move upward towards the sound.

That white fabric, is in fact a nightgown. We discover a young girl, LENA (11, brown skinned) is levitating, asleep, high above Grace.

Grace gasps.

She quietly stands up and extends her hand toward Lena. Lena is just out of Grace's reach.

Grace freezes at the sound of people waking and getting dressed in the next room. Someone could walk toward the front door and easily see Lena.

Grace quickly grabs a chair. She steps onto the chair, places one hand above Lena's belly and the other below her back, and slowly guides her floating body to their cot on the floor.

Grace, now on her knees, looks over Lena as she remains asleep, simply turning over toward her mother.

(O.S.) EDITH
What you doin'??

Grace stifles a jump, and looks toward the loud whisper.

EDITH
Sun'll soon be up now.

EDITH (30s, dark skinned) is standing there, dressed, holding an empty canvas bag.

Grace studies Edith's face. It doesn't seem like Edith saw anything.

GRACE
We comin'.

Edith exits. Grace exhales as she looks back at her sleeping daughter. She kisses Lena's forehead in an effort to wake her.

Lena opens her eyes.

The stress on Grace's face melts. She smiles.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Nightmare?

Lena nods.

GRACE (CONT'D)
C'mon little one. Hurry up and get dressed.

Lena sleepily complies.

3 EXT. BELMONT COTTON PLANTATION - MORNING

3

Field slaves fill the rows of the cotton field. Brown fingers picking cotton. A pregnant woman, HATTIE (35) pulls weeds in the hot sun.

One BOY (12) picks cotton cautiously, his fingertips are starting to bleed.

Grace picks with great focus and experience compared to the boy.

Grace keeps an eye on Lena, who struggles to carry a large bucket of water for the field slaves. Behind Grace is an overseer, JOHN (white, 30), who watches the slaves closely on his horse.

4 EXT. BELMONT COTTON PLANTATION - AFTERNOON

4

Lena plays with a FIVE YEAR OLD BLACK GIRL who wears nothing but a tattered shirt. Their bodies zip past the stalks.

Lena grins with her playmate as they play in the soil.

The adult field slaves are waiting in line, having their cotton weighed. They look exhausted. Grace is amongst them.

The pregnant woman, Hattie, looks toward the Big House. Something has grabbed her attention. She drops her bag of cotton and starts running.

Grace's eyes follow her as a fellow MALE FIELD SLAVE (20s) grabs Hattie before she can reach where she's headed. Hattie screams and pleads as a light-skinned LITTLE GIRL (7) and LITTLE BOY (6) are placed in the back of a cart.

MASTER HENRY (30s, white, wealthy) calmly walks down from the porch. Hattie's eyes follow him, pleadingly.

HATTIE

Please Massa, please don't take my babies, please please....

HENRY

(as if he didn't hear her,
addresses the Slave
Trader)

Come on now I told y'all to be gone
before the hands come back, now go
on.

SLAVE TRADER

Sorry Sir, had to feed the horse
before we went on our way.

The SLAVE TRADER (40s, white man), tilts his cap and offers a discomfiting smile. He lifts his reigns, and the horse and cart move to leave the plantation.

Lena stops playing at the sound of Hattie's weeping. She moves toward Grace.

Lena watches her mother's eyes follow a distraught Hattie being comforted and lead by a GROUP OF FIELD SLAVE WOMEN toward the cabins.

Lena's eyes follow Master Henry as he calmly walks back inside the Big House.

Lena looks at Grace, still standing there watching her worst nightmare.

5 EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - NIGHT

5

Grace walks toward the Big House, holding Lena's hand. It looms over them as they approach the back door.

GRACE
(to Lena)
Stay close to me.

6 INT. KITCHEN - BIG HOUSE - NIGHT

6

A few of the house slaves are seated at a table near the back door, eating cornmeal mush out of wooden bowls and spoons. They're more formally dressed than Grace and Lena, who look out of place, but Grace still looks poised and focused. This space seems warm, jokes being exchanged. Smiles.

ALICE (late 50s, light skinned, grey hair, tough but kind expression) is stirring a meat stew over a fire. She looks up when Grace and Lena enter, and bends down in search for something. Alice places a large empty pot on the counter.

GRACE
Evenin' Alice.

ALICE
Evenin'.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(To Lena)
Hi baby.

Lena smiles, leaning on her mother. Alice looks back at Grace.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(in a knowing tone)
Keepin' her close tonight, hm?

Grace nods. Alice nods back, spooning some cornmeal mush into the large pot. There's friendly banter going on amongst the house slaves.

We gradually hear muffled yelling coming from the next room. The banter halts.

The sound of china or glass breaking.

FEMALE VOICE
Look what you've done!

The sound of a slap.

Grace, ahead of things, quickly moves to grab the pot in an effort to leave when-

ELIZABETH (30s, white) enters the kitchen holding HELEN (19, caramel skinned) by the ear. Helen has one hand over her cheek. Elizabeth forcefully releases her.

HELEN

I'm sorry Missus Elizabeth I was
only trying to show you that...

Elizabeth grabs the metal spoon Alice has been stirring the hot stew with and brings it to Helen's face.

The slaves' eyes widen as Helen cries out.

ELIZABETH
(voice drops)
...SHOW me?

Elizabeth holds the spoon to Helen's face as it sizzles against her skin.

Elizabeth's face holds an eerie focus.

Grace looks on. A bowl and spoon near her shakily levitates. It catches her eye.

Grace looks at Lena, frozen with eyes locked on Helen and Elizabeth, doesn't notice the quivering items.

Grace keeps her eyes on the people in the room.

As the scene holds everyone's attention, Grace subtly pushes the items back down.

Grace takes hold of Lena's hand and caresses it with her thumb.

The quivering kitchenware relaxes.

Elizabeth walks back toward the swing door from whence she came. Her eyes meet Lena's.

There's a quick moment of Lena watching Elizabeth, Elizabeth studying Lena. Elizabeth leaves.

The group exhales and a few move to check on Helen.

This is a different room now.

Grace lifts the heavy pot and nudges Lena to follow her. Lena follows but can't take her eyes off Helen, who's being tended to.

7 EXT. SLAVE CABINS

7

Grace places the large pot on a stump outside. There are field slaves with wooden cups and bowls, ready to get themselves some of the cornmeal mush. Grace pulls two small wooden bowls from her pockets and serves herself and Lena before walking back toward the rows of slave cabins.

GRACE

(her voice drops)

I'd rather be in them fields fo'
the rest of my days then spend one
night in that house.

LENA

Why would she-

GRACE

Some people just have so much mean
in they heart they gotta spread it
around. You steer clear of Missus
at all time. You hear me?

Lena nods.

8 EXT. BELMONT COTTON PLANTATION - MORNING

8

It's another day in the fields. Brown hands picking. Backs curling. Backs stretching. Faces grimace.

Hattie, the woman who lost her children yesterday, is out there picking too. Numbly.

We find Grace's face. Grace alternates from focusing on picking and keeping an eye on Lena. Lena is struggling with a wooden bucket full of water and a gourd, bringing water to the field slaves.

John the overseer moves through the rows on his horse like a vulture. LUKE, (30s, muscular, handsome, dark skinned man) pauses from his work.

LUKE

Lena! Come over here with that
water girl!

Lena smiles as she waddles with the wooden bucket over to him.

Grace has a small smile at this and continues with her picking.

Lena smiles at Luke as he sips from the gourd.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 That bucket is as big as you is,
 how you carryin' that around?

LENA
 I ain't that big yet but I'm as
 strong as you!

Luke grins a gorgeous smile.

LUKE
 (laughing)
 Oh yeah? We'll see about that.
 We'll wrestle arms tonight!

As Luke hands Lena back the gourd we hear the hooves of a horse.

JOHN
 That's enough Luke, get back to work.

LUKE
 Just gettin' a drink o water Sir.

CRACK!

Lena and Luke jump.

Grace looks toward the sound.

But John had only whipped it into the air. Luke hastily gets back to work while Grace waves Lena over to her.

Lena walks back over to her mother. She looks back at Luke's smile-less face.

9 EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - AT THE SAME TIME

9

Elizabeth sits on the porch sipping out of a crystal glass. She watches Lena and Grace.

10 EXT. COTTON FIELD - AT THE SAME TIME

10

Grace feels eyes on her, she turns and peers toward Elizabeth on the porch.

Elizabeth continues to sip, watching.

Grace looks away, and continues picking.

11

EXT. BLACKSMITH'S CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON

11

Grace and Lena enter JAMES (Black, 23) the Blacksmith's Cabin. Grace carries a small amount of veggies in her arms.

James is hammering a horseshoe.

JAMES

Stand back now. Don't want these
sparks to getcha.

Lena looks around at all the tools and shelves. The glowing fire pit. She watches James cool the horseshoe, and hang it up with a line of others.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Let me get those pots for you
Grace.

GRACE

Thank you James. Some things from
my garden.

JAMES

Best garden on this side of
Georgia!

James grabs two homemade pots hanging and places them on a worktable when John the overseer enters.

Lena watches John enter the cabin with discomfort.

JOHN

My horse needs those new shoes now
James.

JAMES

Yes suh.

James take the roots and vegetables from Grace one by one into his arms.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(to Grace)

I'll take those yams. Thank you-

JOHN

(raises his voice)

NOW James.

Lena jumps at John's raised voice.

JAMES

YES suh, right away suh.

Grace looks up and one of her pots are floating high in the air.

John exits.

Grace quickly grabs Lena's body and lifts her in the air. Lena instinctively grabs the pot.

James turns around, sees Grace holding Lena awkwardly holding the pot like some circus act.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Nice huh? Been sellin' em in town
when I can. I bes' get back to
work.

James double takes.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You got a strong little girl there
Grace.

Grace forces a smile.

James rushes out.

Grace puts Lena down.

They both exhale. Lena starts laughing. Grace does not.

GRACE
There was nothing funny about that.

12 INT. GRACE'S CABIN - NIGHT

12

Lena lies in bed, holding a doll made of twigs. Grace gets in, she adjusts the blanket over herself and Lena. Grace strokes Lena's hair.

GRACE
What do you think would have
happened if James saw what happened
today?

Lena sighs.

LENA
Mama, James is nice. He wouldn't
say nothin'.

GRACE
How you know that?
(pause)
(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)
 And what if it was Mistuh John? Hm?
 You think he wouldn't say nothin?

Lena considers this.

GRACE (CONT'D)
 Black or white it don't matter. If
 anyone catch you they will hurt
 you. Take you away from me.

Lena listens. Looks up at her mother.

LENA
 What's wrong with me mama?

Silence.

Grace thinks on her words.

GRACE
 I don't know baby.

More silence. Lena thinks; looks up at her mother.

LENA
 I won't show no one. I promise.

Grace kisses Lena on the forehead.

GRACE
 Thank you. Let's go to sleep.

Grace closes her eyes. Lena's eyes remain open, in her mother's embrace.

She starts to doze when-

There's a KNOCK at the door. Grace, concerned, rises to answer it.

Grace opens it and it's CLARA (Black, 20s), one of the house girls.

Lena sits up. She hears whispering between them but we cannot hear what is being said. She hears her mother raise her voice slightly.

GRACE
 Can't this wait till mornin'?

CLARA (20s, black), dressed in house girl uniform, stands outside the door.

CLARA
 (Shakes her head)
 Missus says bring her now.
 (pauses)
 I'll wait out here.

Grace shoots her a look.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry but I can't go back empty handed.

14 INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

14

Lena senses something is wrong, after a few moments the door squeaks shut.

LENA
 Who was that Mama?

Grace sits down at their small handmade wooden table, she interlocks her fingers tightly and presses her hands against her lips. Takes deep breaths and scans the room.

Lena studies her mother's expression.

GRACE
 (looking away)
 You're going to move into the Big House, to be a house girl.

Lena thinks to herself.

LENA
 Why?

Grace manages to bring her eyes to Lena.

GRACE
 That don't matter. Dis what lie before us.

Grace finally looks at Lena. She walks toward her, takes the doll out of her hand and sets it down.

GRACE (CONT'D)
 Put yuh shoes on.

LENA

I don't want to go I want to stay
with you.

GRACE

It's not up to you, it's not up to
me.

Grace takes her hand and leads her to the door. Lena resists.

LENA

But I don't know nobody in there!
Please mama, please don't make me
go.

As Lena panics, the bed starts vibrating.

LENA (CONT'D)

(louder now)

Please mama...

The bed slightly jerks to the right. The doll skakily rises
into the air.

Grace grabs Lena's shoulders.

GRACE

Stop it! Stop it right now.

Grace takes Lena's hands in hers, caressing them with her
thumb.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(speaking gently)

Lena, look at me. *This*, can't
happen. You've got to-

LENA

(glancing at the rising
doll)

-control your feelins.

Lena squeezes her eyes shut. Takes a deep breath.

The doll gently falls to the ground. We stay with the doll as
Grace and Lena exit the cabin.

Clara walks ahead of Grace and Lena. Grace searches for
words.

GRACE

Trust nobody. Everyone is just
tryna survive this place. You hear?

LENA

Yes Mama.

They continue walking.

GRACE

Stay to yourself. Stay quiet. Know
yuh best is never enough. Don't let
anyone see what you can do. Not
anyone. Not ever.

Grace and Lena walk in silence. Lena takes her mother's hand.

There's still something else heavy on Grace's mind.

Clara enters the back door, then Alice appears in the doorway. Helen stands behind Alice, the scar from the hot spoon still large and fresh on her cheek.

Grace kneels down, eye-level with Lena.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Baby...

Grace looks into Lena's big, curious, brown eyes. She opens her mouth to speak, looks up at Alice who towers over them, then sighs. Words failing her again. She looks back at Lena.

Grace kisses her forehead.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Forgive me.

Lena looks at her mother.

ALICE

(to Lena)

Come on.

Lena looks up at Alice and steps into the doorway.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(to Grace)

Yo mama looked out for me. I'll be
lookin' out for her.

Grace gives a grateful nod.

Lena and Grace keep eyes on one another until the door closes on Grace.

16

INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

16

Lena turns and looks around at the unfamiliar faces. Alice has one hand on her shoulder.

ALICE

This is Lena everyone. She'll be with us from now on.

MARY (Black, late 30s, attractive) offers a small smile to Lena, whose discomfort is evident.

MARY

My name is Mary, I'll be showing you how we do things at first light.

Lena nods.

MARY (CONT'D)

You've met Clara, there's Ben

BEN (40s, Black, tired but kind face) gives a extra-gentlemanly bow that makes Lena smile a little.

MARY (CONT'D)

and Helen.

Helen only looks at Lena with a piercing gaze before looking away.

17

INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT

17

House slaves are sleeping on small beds in what looks like an attic. It's packed, not much personal space for anyone. We fall on Lena whose eyes are wide open.

18

INT. BIG HOUSE LIVING ROOM- EARLY MORNING

18

The house girls, including Lena, stand attentively in a line in a lavish living room. They all wear similar dresses in a shade of olive green. Lena's looks a bit big on her.

MARY

Helen, you'll start in the bedrooms and living room and show Lena how we do things.

Helen nods.

Lena looks around the living room. Its yellow walls, chandelier, the rich red fabric of the couch.

A painting of a white family hangs on the wall. She recognizes a young Elizabeth in it.

On the table, Black and white photographs of white faces of past.

MARY (CONT'D)

(to Lena)

When you speak to Missus Elizabeth it's "yes Missus, no Missus, of course Missus". Never look white folk in the eye when you talk to them neither. But it's best not to talk 'les you have to. Understand?

Lena looks back at Mary. Nods.

Mary continues giving her orders for the day...

19 INT. BIG HOUSE BEDROOM - MORNING

19

Lena and Helen change the sheets of a bed. Helen doesn't speak to Lena. Lena studies Helen, looks for something to say, but doesn't.

20 INT. BIG HOUSE FOYER - MORNING

20

Lena sweeps in the foyer. A CREAK comes from the Master's study.

Lena looks toward the sound to find the door to the study slightly cracked. She sees Clara slide a pair of scissors into her apron. Clara catches Lena watching her.

Lena looks away and returns to her sweeping when the front door opens. Helen enters the foyer.

Clara leaves the study and moves past Lena and Helen.

Lena continues sweeping and notices Helen's eyes follow Clara hastening from the foyer.

21 INT. BIG HOUSE HALLWAY - MORNING

21

Lena sweeps past Elizabeth, who sits at her writing table.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

Oh Lena! Come here won't you?

22

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

22

Lena enters with hesitation.

Elizabeth's hand pulls open a small drawer. She pulls out a simple, red ribbon.

Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

I saw this while I was in town and
thought of you.

Elizabeth hands it to Lena. Lena only holds it in her hand.

LENA

(pauses)

What you like me to do with this
Missus?

ELIZABETH

Wear it of course! Go on.

Elizabeth turns her around, and attempts to tie the ribbon in Lena's hair.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Think of it as a welcome gift.

Lena gives a small, slightly uncomfortable, smile.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It'll be nice to have some new
blood around here. Someone I can
train from young. To do things
right.

(completes her ribbon)

There you are.

Elizabeth turns Lena's body to face the vanity mirror.
Elizabeth's smiles as Lena looks at the lush red ribbon in
her hair. Lena gives Elizabeth a small smile.

23

INT. BIG HOUSE SEWING ROOM - AFTERNOON

23

Helen and Lena are making clothes. Mary sits in the corner of
the sewing room, breast-feeding a white baby boy, JOSEPH (8
months old).

Lena can't help but stare.

His blue eyes open and close, falling asleep as he sucks on
Mary's dark brown nipple.

Mary finishes and gently holds the baby in her arms and carries him into the next bedroom.

24 INT. BABY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

24

Mary gently lays the baby down in her crib, kisses him on the forehead, and adjusts the blankets around him. She exits.

25 INT. BIG HOUSE SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

25

Mary re-enters the sewing room. Helen sews a blue dress in the corner. It's beautiful handiwork.

Lena attempts to make stitches on the sleeve of a suit jacket. Mary stands over her, looking at her work.

MARY

(to Lena)

That's it. Not too tight now. Don't want it to pop at the swish of an arm.

Helen, fixated in her work, looks up at a KNOCK. Ben pokes his head in the doorway.

BEN

Missus wants us all downstairs.
Now.

Mary sighs.

26 INT. BIG HOUSE FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

26

The house slaves stand in a line. Mistress Elizabeth walks down the line. Lena stands next to Helen, whose eyes look forward, but her breath is quick.

Lena notices Master Henry standing in his study. He observes the scene, then closes the door.

Mistress Elizabeth paces down the line. She looks into their faces.

They all keep their eyes forward.

ELIZABETH

A pair of scissors have gone missing.

Lena keeps her head down, but her eyes fall on Clara, who remains composed.

Lena looks at Helen, who is difficult to read.

Elizabeth continues down the line.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Fine then. That's 5 lashes for each
of you. Tonight.

There's a shift in the room upon hearing this.

Elizabeth basks in the thick silence. Studies their faces,
expressions slightly changed.

Lena looks at Clara. Uncertain. When-

Helen's index finger rises. Pointing right at Clara.

Clara's stoicism breaks upon hearing this. She looks at Helen
wide-eyed.

Lena tries to keep her eyes forward.

Elizabeth takes in this information. We stay with Elizabeth
as she turns to charge at Clara with a hard SLAP. We hear a
small thud as Clara meets the ground.

Lena jumps at the sound of it. She looks dizzy.

A painting behind Lena starts to shake. Lena's eyes widen as
the edges of the frame vibrate against the wall. She closes
her eyes and takes deep breaths.

Clara shakes her head "no", pleadingly.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Don't you dare lie.

CLARA
Irene in the fields was having a
baby and I took the scissors and a
bucket of hot water to help.

ELIZABETH
(eyes locked on Clara)
Is this true Helen?

Silence.

Helen nods.

Lena opens her eyes.

The painting stills.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(to Clara)
Then why were they not returned?
Where are they now?

Clara pulls the scissors out of her apron pocket and slowly holds them out to Elizabeth who takes them from her, examines them, turns them around so that the blades are pointed toward Clara's neck.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Don't you ever take from me again.
(pauses)
Alice.

Alice looks toward Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(casually)
No meals for her for two days.

ALICE
Yes Missus.

Elizabeth rubs her temple.

ELIZABETH
Just go.

Everyone disperses.

Lena sees Clara give a loaded look to Helen before turning to follow Alice to the kitchen.

Lena, Helen, and Mary return to the sewing room. Mary closes the door behind them.

Lena stares curiously at Helen, who sits in her chair. Helen looks up and Lena looks away.

Mary exhales.

MARY
These white folks getting nervous
with that Baylor boy gon' missin'.
Nothin' worse than nervous white
folk.

Helen listens, but says nothing.

LENA
Missin'?

MARY

Run away. Ain't no one seen him for
five days. Slave catchers is
everywhere.

Lena processes this.

27

INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

27

Brown fingertips carefully plate a dinner plate. Steam rises from a small broiled chicken that is cooked to perfection. Accompanied with neatly sliced yams and a cob of corn. The plate next to it is identical. Alice scans the presentation of each plate.

Helen places a steamy pie onto the counter. There is a beautifully braided crust, and meticulously layered sliced apples topping the pie.

Helen picks up the first plate of dinner, lifts her chin, mutes her expression and elegantly postures her hold of the plate.

ALICE

Okay, Clara now you.

Clara does a similar gathering of herself.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Lena now you. Watch what the girls do. When you get to the table, walk to the left around the table. Give them they food on they right.

Lena works to retain this information. Helen starts through the swing door leading to the dining room. Her hands hold the plate on each side, nearly touching the food.

Alice adjusts Lena's hand to hold the plate from underneath.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Like this. Go.

Clara goes through the door next. Lena follows.

28

INT. BIG HOUSE DINING ROOM - EVENING

28

Henry is seated at a medium long wooden table covered with a white tablecloth. The room is candlelit, including a chandelier of candles above. The plates are being placed down. Elizabeth enters the dining room.

Lena places a dinner plate in front of Elizabeth, who watches her closely. Clara holds a large fan of feathers, fanning the table.

Elizabeth places a napkin on her lap.

ELIZABETH
Joseph is sound asleep.

Lena sees Helen standing against the wall, blank expression, with both hands placed politely over her stomach. Lena replicates Helen's stance.

HENRY
(chewing)
Yes, Mary is good with him.

Lena watches Elizabeth's expression that looks as if this stung a little.

ELIZABETH
So how's it going with the campaign?

HENRY
Until I reign in Baylor and Jackson it won't matter how many votes I get. Too many men wait and watch to see how they'll vote and follow suit.

Elizabeth nods.

ELIZABETH
Well, Tom Baylor and Jackson are true Southern gentlemen. What they want to know--

HENRY
Maybe we should host them here at the house. Big dinner party, I think I could get their support over a glass of whiskey after we wine and dine them.
(sips his drink)
Could you put that together?

Lena watches Elizabeth force a smile.

ELIZABETH
Of course.

29 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - LATER 29

The house women are cleaning the kitchen. Alice the cook scrapes scraps into a few small wooden bowls. Mary cleans the dishes, while Lena and Helen bring the dirty dishes from the dining room.

Lena hands Mary her dishes.

She sees Mary notice the red ribbon Elizabeth gave her.

Mary signals Clara to look. Clara rolls her eyes mockingly.

Lena looks away.

30 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT 30

Lena and other slaves are asleep in the small attic. Lena wakes at the sound of a creak.

It's Helen. Lena's eyes curiously follow Helen as she tiptoes in and lies down in her own cot.

Lena goes back to sleep.

31 INT. BIG HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY 31

Helen and Lena clean the living room.

Helen carefully wipes down items while Lena sweeps.

Lena glances at Helen every now and then. Who still doesn't say a word.

32 INT. BIG HOUSE FOYER - DAY 32

It's a hot day. Slaves are doing backbreaking labor in the field. Lena peers through her window to see her mother.

She looks happy just to have her eyes fall on her for a moment.

Lena turns at the sound of Helen carrying a large basket overflowing with clothes and fabrics down the stairs. Clara enters the foyer when two items fall from Helen's basket. Clara looks down at them, then walks right past Helen.

Lena watches Helen's face tighten as Clara brushes past her.

33

EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - AFTERNOON

33

Lena and Helen stand like statues against the wall.

Elizabeth sits across from ANNE (20s, white, blonde, attractive) and MARGARET (20s, white, brunette). Henry stands nearby.

Elizabeth pads her forehead and upper lip with a cloth napkin as Margaret and Anne sip iced tea.

Looks like Henry may be drinking something a bit stronger, as he gives a sigh after a sip.

MARGARET

Henrietta swore she saw him on her way to her outhouse.

Anne says nothing.

Elizabeth is engaged by Margaret while Henry's eyes stay on the plantation before them.

ELIZABETH

How could she have seen him when they found his scraps near the Tomkin's property?

MARGARET

Maybe he's turned around. Or knows he can't go no further.

(with a gossipy smile)
He's stuck.

Lena listens.

Margaret looks at Anne.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I heard Tom is starting to lose it a bit.

Elizabeth notices Anne pause.

ANNE

It has been a challenging time.

MARGARET

I could imagine! If you can't keep your niggers in line, people will start to think you have no business owning any.

Elizabeth listens.

HENRY

I spoke to Tom,
 (takes a sip of whiskey)
 said he's feeding him to the dogs
 as soon as he gets his hands on
 him.

Helen and Lena exchange glances.

34

INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

34

The house women are in the kitchen preparing for dinner.
 Helen is shucking corn, Lena chops vegetables alongside Alice
 who is feathering a duck.

Clara is focused on her sewing in a wooden chair in a corner.

Lena's demeanor is off. Alice notices.

ALICE

You alright baby?

Lena takes a deep breath, this question breaks her composure.

LENA

I just...I ain't seen my mama since
 I came here.

The women nod. Understanding. Lena's eyes fall on Helen who
 nods while she shucks.

LENA (CONT'D)

Where's yo Mama Helen?

All the women look up, there's a pause in the energy of the
 room.

Lena looks around, feeling she's approached a boundary of
 some kind.

Helen, of course, does not respond. She only looks away,
 perhaps remembering to herself.

Clara, noticing this along with Lena, jumps in.

CLARA

My mother was Lila Davis. She was
 born in Virginia. Her mother was
 taken in Africa when she was a
 little girl.

The women are listening intently.

CLARA (CONT'D)

A big boat was down at the edge of the bay an' the people was all excited about it. An' some of the bravest went up pretty close to get a look at it.

Alice listens with intrigue.

CLARA (CONT'D)

The men on the boat told them to come on board and they could have these pretty red handkerchiefs. A lot of them went on board. And the ship sailed away with them.

Lena studies Alice's strong, slightly wrinkled brown hands pluck a feather from the duck's flesh. Pluck.

Pluck.

ALICE

(voice very low)

I ain't seen my Mama since I was 5 years old. Came here from Alabama.

(pauses)

Can't remember what she look like anymore.

Alice continues to slowly feather the duck.

Helen listens.

ALICE (CONT'D)

All I got now is a feelin'.

Lena listens and observes Alice, the monotone of her voice. Her furrowed brow.

Mary enters the kitchen with a small pile of clean dinner plates. She looks around, noticing the stillness of the room. Mary places the plates down by Lena and Alice.

MARY

What's goin' on in here?

LENA

Ms. Alice was telling us about her mama

Alice shoots Lena a look.

Mary pauses at this with a frown. She looks around the room, contemplation on the women's expressions.

MARY
 Ain't no use thinkin' on them
 things.

Mary separates the large plates from the small.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Best put them thoughts away.

The women process Mary's words.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Well finish up here you know we
 don't got long till supper.

They all slowly resume their tasks. Mary exits.

Lena processes Mary's response. Clara offers Lena a glance of what could be comfort.

35 INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

35

It's quiet at the dinner table tonight between Henry and Elizabeth. Elizabeth looks up at Henry. Henry doesn't notice and continues chewing.

Helen is fanning the table tonight. She looks exhausted. Her eyes are heavy.

Lena watches as Helen nods off a bit, causing the turkey-feather fan to slowly drop and brush over Henry's head.

HENRY
 (clears throat)
 Helen.

Helen wakes, and looks mortified. And adjusts her posture. Lena looks worried while the other house women maintain their stoicism.

36 INT. KITCHEN - LATER

36

The house women are cleaning up. Lena observes Helen's fatigue as they polish the silverware.

37 EXT. FOYER - LATER

37

Helen and Lena head upstairs when-

ELIZABETH
 Helen.

Shit. Helen turns to Elizabeth, who holds a drink in a crystal glass.

Helen walks toward Elizabeth, avoiding eye contact.

Elizabeth keeps her voice low and steady.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Why is it that you are incapable of performing the simplest of tasks?

Helen doesn't answer.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Hm?

Elizabeth's hand comes down on the top of Helen's head. Helen takes it.

Camera stays on Elizabeth. Her rage. Her eyes. Her actions.

Elizabeth continues to strike her head from different angles as she speaks.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(while pounding on her head)

Must you...continue...to embarrass me?

Lena looks on at the scene, trying to maintain her stoicism while Elizabeth is reaming into Helen.

Details start to move in slow motion. The angry posture of Elizabeth's moving lips. The anxiety in Helen's face.

Lena's stoicism is breaking, she massages her forehead. Dizzy.

Elizabeth's yelling sounds muffled.

Slow motion of Elizabeth's aggressive gesturing with one hand, a crystal glass in her other hand.

Lena's anxious face. She's breathes heavily. Eyes locked on Elizabeth.

CLOSE ON the glass in Elizabeth's hand.

CLOSE ON Lena's eyes, they squint slightly.

CLOSE ON Lena's balled fist.

CLOSE ON the glass, it SHATTERS.

Helen and Elizabeth jump at the sound and sight of the glass shattering in Elizabeth's hand.

Lena jumps too.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Oh!

Silence.

Elizabeth looks at Helen.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Don't just stand there get
something to clean this up.

Lena stares as Elizabeth carefully shakes the fragments off her skirt, and exits the room.

38 INT. BIG HOUSE - NIGHT

38

Lena walks upstairs toward the attic, and walks past the open door of the Master Bedroom, where Elizabeth sits in a sofa chair, reading.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)
Lena.

Lena turns around and stands in the doorway.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Come in here.

Lena hesitantly enters.

Elizabeth smiles and points to the ground.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Go on.

Lena notices the cowhide on the night-stand next to Elizabeth's chair as she proceeds to sit on the floor. She's reading a black, leather bound book, the title engraved with gold print that reads: "THE HOLY BIBLE."

Elizabeth opens it in front of Lena. There's an illustration of two figures at the bottom of the page. A monster: black, grotesque, clawed and snarling. At the top, a pale blonde woman, draped in shimmering white cloth. She's beautiful, with white wings on her back.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Isaiah Chapter 5 Verse 20: Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Lena's eyes fall back on the illustration, curiously so. Elizabeth notices this, smiles.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You like the picture?

Lena slowly brings her index finger to the creature she looks up at Elizabeth. Elizabeth nods, permitting it. Lena touches its black fur, its snout-like face.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

That right there is the devil. And

this over here,

(her white index finger
points to the angel while
Lena's is on the devil)

Is an angel. They are messengers of God they watch over us and protect us.

Lena stares at the angelic white woman.

LENA

She looks like you.

Elizabeth takes this observation as a high compliment and smiles.

ELIZABETH

Why thank you, Lena.

Elizabeth pulls the Bible back toward her and continues to read. Lena listens.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devils work....

39 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT

39

Lena lies down in her cot. It's been a long day. She brings both her hands in front of her face. Examining them. Her palms.

40 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

40

Squeezed out lemon halves lie on the counter. Alice stirs lemonade in a glass pitcher.

Lena walks in as Alice places the pitcher alongside two empty glasses on a tray. Hands it to Lena.

ALICE
Here baby.

41 EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - AFTERNOON

41

Elizabeth sits on the porch reading. Clara and Helen stand against the house behind her.

ELIZABETH
Did y'all finish the butter and jams? And ironin' the linens in the guest bedrooom?

CLARA
Yes Missus.

Lena enters the porch, places the tray down on the table in front of Elizabeth, who doesn't look up from her reading. Lena pours Elizabeth a glass when she jumps at the sound of the crack of a whip.

It's Luke, being whipped by the overseer.

Luke's face, twisted in pain.

Lena, pours the lemonade while glancing at Elizabeth, who is unfazed and reading.

Lena hands her the glass of lemonade and Elizabeth takes it, barely looking up.

The house girls watch the scene, but then look away.

MOS: Lena looks up again as Luke winces from the pain.

MOS: The overseer's whip rises in slow motion.

Lena's eyes watch the scene. They blink in slow motion. We hear her breath.

CLOSE ON the whip as it slices the air toward Luke then leaves the Overseer's grip.

The whip flies out of the Overseer's hand.

Lena's eyes widen at this. She looks at Helen and Clara, who have noticed it too.

Soundscape returns: The overseer walks over to where the whip landed. Walks back toward Luke and strikes the ground next to him, then moves on.

Lena stands there. Processing this moment.

42 INT. KITCHEN - LATER

42

Helen and Alice are preparing dinner. Helen chops potatoes while Alice feathers a bird. Lena enters the kitchen.

ALICE
(looks up at Lena's entrance)
Oh good, grab that bucket and head on to the well so I can boil these potatoes.

Lena grabs the bucket, looks at Alice and Helen who are both focused on their tasks.

Lena swipes the wooden cup from the table and places it in her pocket. She walks out the door.

43 EXT. WELL - AFTERNOON

43

Lena uses all her strength to pull the rope, bringing the bucket, now filled with water back to the top. She ties the rope so the bucket does not fall as she tries to unhook it.

44 EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

44

Someone's POV of Lena through the trees as she cautiously looks over her shoulder and walks with the bucket through the woods.

Lena stops and places the bucket on the ground. She looks around again.

She pulls the small, wooden cup from her pocket and places it onto a large rock. She takes a few steps backward from it till there's enough space between them. She extends her arm and fingers toward the cup with great concentration.

The cup remains still.

She takes a step closer and tries again with this approach.

Nothing.

She sits down right in front of the rock. Her eyes narrowed in on the cup. She stares at it with intensity.

Nothing.

Lena gets up, and kicks the dirt on the ground in frustration. The cup twitches to the right just a bit.

Lena turns around to look at the cup. She thinks to herself. She looks at the cup with serious concentration, it seems like there will be a breakthrough.

NOTHING.

She yells at the cup and it flies off the rock. She smirks, then walks toward the cup and places it back on the rock. She gathers herself before she yells at the cup even louder. The cup goes flying.

Lena smiles.

Shape of a Black woman's figure, we cannot see who, watching
Lena. She exits.

45

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

45

Brown hands snapping green beans. These hands are Clara's. Alice holds a dead chicken. She chops off its head with one swing of a cleaver.

Lena enters the kitchen, Clara notices Lena smiling. So does Alice.

ALICE

What you grinnin' for?

LENA

Nothin'.

Lena brings the bucket of water and pours it into the pot over the fire pit.

ALICE
(studies her)
Mhm.

46 INT. BATHROOM - LATER

46

Helen bathes Elizabeth. She gently runs a cloth up and down her arm. Helen holds a dutiful expression. Elizabeth's expression says that everything is as it should be.

47 INT. HALLWAY - AT THE SAME TIME

47

Lena brings a small bucket down the hallway.

48 INT. BATHROOM

48

She arrives to the bathroom where Elizabeth is being bathed. Lena places it alongside Helen.

Lena exits and turns down the hallway. The sound of water being poured.

SLAP.

Lena pauses. She leans against the wall just outside the bathroom.

ELIZABETH (O.C.)
Don't you see that's too hot?

Helen keeps her eyes down. She looks outside the doorway. Helen senses Lena, who stands out of view outside the bathroom.

Helen dips the cloth into the water. Waits a moment before bringing it to Elizabeth's skin.

Lena lingers there against the wall, her head turned toward where Helen sits inside. The both of them, sensing one another.

Lena exits down the hallway.

49 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT

49

Lena lies down in her cot and closes her eyes when Helen enters the attic, and gets into her own cot.

At the head of Helen's cot, Helen finds Lena's red ribbon. Helen smiles, and lies down.

LENA
 (whispers)
 Goodnight Helen.

Helen looks up at this. She closes her eyes.

50 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - MORNING 50

The other slaves are slowly rising, while Lena is nearly dressed and exits.

51 INT. BIG HOUSE BEDROOM - MORNING 51

Lena stares at a broom leaning against the wall across the room.

She intensely squints her eyes.

Nothing.

She continues her intense gaze.

CRACK Lena jumps at the sound of a whip in the fields and the broom shifts to the right, before it falls. The handle of the broom is now cracked.

The sound of footsteps headed this way, Lena quickly picks up the broom, hiding the crack with her hands, when Mary enters.

MARY
 Everything alright in here?

LENA
 Mhm, yes.

MARY
 Finish up here and get downstairs to help Helen wash the linens.

Lena nods. Mary exits. Lena sweeps and looks out the window.

52 EXT. RIVER - LATER 52

Lena and Helen are washing clothes at the creek.

Lena looks up at Helen, who is focused on her task. She pauses, then splashes Helen. Helen gives her a sharp look.

LENA
(smirks)
Sorry.

They continue scrubbing.

Helen is splashed again. She's annoyed now. She's splashed again and finally splashes Lena back. There's a surprised grin on Lena's, now wet, face.

EXTREME WIDE of them splashing each other at the river, their laughter echoing in the woods.

53 EXT. WOODS - LATER

53

Lena and Helen are walking, each holding a basket of linens, and Lena also has an empty water bucket.

LENA
I'll go to the well. You go ahead
without me.

Helen gives her a suspicious look.

LENA (CONT'D)
That way you can get started on
hangin' them to dry. I won't be
long.

Helen complies, takes Lena's basket, and turns left back toward the plantation.

Lena watches her walk away, then turns right.

54 EXT. WELL - AFTERNOON

54

Lena ropes the bucket from the well, now filled with water. She places the heavy bucket down, looks around, and walks toward the same rock. She pulls the same wooden cup from her pocket.

Through the trees, as if someone may be watching, we see Lena place it down, and take a few steps backward.

She stares at the cup.

Nothing.

Gives it a quick wave with her hand.

Nothing.

She thinks to herself, takes a moment, then yells at the cup again, and it flies off the rock and lands at a pair of feet.

WOMAN (O.S.)
What in the world is you doin'?

Lena goes rigid at the sight of the WOMAN (Black, late 60s, grey, strong expression, curmudgeon energy).

LENA
Nothin' ma'am.

WOMAN
Show me what you was doin'.

LENA
I should be gettin' back to the Big House.

WOMAN
Yes you should, but not before you show me what you was doin'.

Lena looks for the best way to run.

The Woman picks up on that, and sighs as she eyes the cup and raises her index finger casually.

The cup steadily levitates back onto the rock. Lena's eyes widen.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

55

The Woman is walking, with Lena walking behind her with her empty bucket. The Woman pauses, looks around her, then lifts a hidden hatch door in the ground.

Lena's eyes widen at the sight of this as the Woman goes down an interior ladder into the unknown.

WOMAN
Come on.'

The Woman sees Lena's hesitation.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Trust me.

56

INT. WOMAN'S HATCH - AFTERNOON

56

Lena takes the last step down the ladder and turns around to see about 15 square feet of space lit entirely of candles scattered. There's small cot on the floor, a fire pit, a few wooden planks shoved into the wall to serve as shelves.

On one of the shelves is a handmade doll made of twigs.

Lena smiles in wonder, then pauses.

LENA

What plantation you from?

WOMAN

I'm not from any plantation. Not anymore.

LENA

So...you live in the ground?

WOMAN

Mhm.

LENA

What if it rains?

WOMAN

I do just fine.

Silence.

LENA

But why?

WOMAN

Why what?

LENA

Why do you live down here?

WOMAN

Down here I'm free, up there
(points upward)
I ain't.

LENA

(under her breath)
Freedom is a lot smaller than I
thought.

The Woman looks annoyed, then starts turning in circles, looking for something.

WOMAN
(mumbling to herself)
Where did I put that jar?

Lena glances around, sees it, and moves toward it to hand it to her when-

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ah.

The jar floats away from Lena and into the Woman's hand.

Lena watches this effortless control in awe.

LENA
You think you could teach me how to
do that?

The Woman looks at her.

WOMAN
What you want with learnin' this?

LENA
So I can
(searches for words)
...be strong.

WOMAN
Against who?

Silence.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
You best get back to the Big House
'fore somebody come lookin' for
you.

Lena nods, and turns toward the ladder.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
You remember how to get here?

Lena turns back. Nods.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(watches her)
Okay. Come back in 2 days time,
same time.

Lena jumps up in excitement.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 And don't be practicing out in the
 open, you hear?

LENA
 Yes, ma'am. Thank you!

WOMAN
 Get out of here.

The Woman's eyes follow Lena as she giddily exits.

57 EXT BELMONT PLANTATION - DAY

57

Clara, Alice and Lena are dyeing fabric out back.

CLARA
 If you are eating with a mouthful
 of food and sneeze, that sho is a
 true sign of death.

Alice rolls her eyes.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 I know that cause last year I was
 with Bettie and her son Wylie when
 they was eaten and Wylie sneezed
 and said "Mama I'm so sorry I just
 couldn't help it the sneeze came on
 me so quick". I just sat there and
 looked at him and began to wonder.

Lena listens.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 Two weeks later, she was dead!

Lena's eyes widen.

ALICE
 Clara hush with that mess!

CLARA
 It's true! If a picture falls off
 the wall, someone in the family
 will die.

Clara works with the maple and pine bark, turning the fabric
 a lilac color, as she gabbers on.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 If you dream about teeth, and one
 falls out that's another sign of
 death.

ALICE
 Why are all these signs endin' in
 death?

Lena smirks.

CLARA
 It's not just death. If you left
 hand itches you will receive money.

ALICE
 Hush up now, I's older than dis
 here tree ain't never seen no money
 turn up in-

LENA
 What about witches?

The question pauses the women's playful bickering.

CLARA
 Witches?

Alice looks at Lena.

Lena now looks self conscious about her question.

Clara thinks to herself.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 I don't think I know nothin' bout
 no witches.

Lena nods casually.

Alice observes Lena's body language.

58 INT. BIG HOUSE - NIGHT

58

Activity in the Big House is slowing down for the evening.

59 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

59

Alice puts out the last candle in the kitchen.

60

INT. BIG HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

60

Elizabeth reads a book to baby Joseph. Lena is fanning them, enjoying the story as well.

Sudden activity can be heard downstairs. Elizabeth looks up at the sound of the commotion when Clara enters the doorway, with a worried expression.

CLARA

Missus you better come quick. Miss Anne is here and she don't look good.

61

INT. BIG HOUSE FOYER - NIGHT

61

A beautifully dressed white woman, ANNE (20s, attractive) is being held up by Ben. Elizabeth is coming down the stairs while Lena and Clara, who is holding the baby, follow.

ANNE

(words slurring a bit)
Get your hands off me you filthy...

Ben gently releases her. Anne crumbles, and Ben catches her again.

ELIZABETH

Annabelle what in the world is going on?

Anne looks up at Elizabeth and attempts a smile. The corner of her mouth is swollen, her left eye purple, the top of her pale hands bruised. Anne gives a small cackle.

ANNE

(laughter slows)
I'm sorry darling I just..uh...
(sadness washes over her expression)
I didn't...I didn't know where else to go.

ELIZABETH

(thinking the worst)
Did...did a nigger do this to you?
Henry will get the sheriff right now...

Anne thoroughly shakes her head no, it's clear at this point she may be a bit drunk.

ANNE
 No no no...it was...
 (looking as if she might
 cry)
 Tom...he just...

Elizabeth, understanding, keeps her eyes locked on Anne.

ELIZABETH
 Alice get me a hot wet rag.

Alice nods and heads to the kitchen.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 Helen prepare the guest room for
 Anne...

Helen nods and goes upstairs and takes Lena's hand for her to follow her. Lena watches the spectacle as she ascends.

62 INT. BIG HOUSE GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

62

Helen comes in with a small bucket of water and a rag.

ELIZABETH
 Give it to me.

Helen looks surprised and hands her the bucket.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 (without looking at her)
 Now get out.

Elizabeth's hands wring the rag as steam rises from it. Elizabeth dips the tip of the rag in and brings it to Anne's swollen cheek. She is tender with Anne.

Anne winces.

ANNE
 It stings.

ELIZABETH
 Shhh. It's got a little brine in
 it.

ANNE
 Brine? Like for slaves?

ELIZABETH
 It helps it heal a little faster.

Elizabeth pauses, wrings out a little blood before dipping it back into the bucket. And brings it to Anne's eye.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
And, if I may: He did beat you like one.

Anne looks at her sharply with her good eye, clearly uncomfortable.

Silence.

ANNE
Tom's been unraveling ever since
that nigger boy ran away. Every day
that passes he feels like he's
losing respect.

ELIZABETH
And beating you solves that how?

Anne looks away from her, moving her face from the cloth.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Anne looks at the wall.

Elizabeth looks at her, as if debating something.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
After Henry's father died, he came
home one night.

Anne listens.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(whispers)
He was so drunk he couldn't find
his ass with both hands in his
pockets.

Anne laughs then winces from the pain.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(laughing quietly)
Sorry sorry...

Elizabeth returns to bringing the cloth to Anne's wounds.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Not to sound superstitious but it
was as if the mean old man's ghost
had possessed him.

Anne listens intently. Elizabeth dips the cloth in hot water. Wrings it.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
He tried to force himself on me and
slapped me when I wouldn't go
along.

ANNE
What did you do?

Elizabeth sighs, continuing to dab Anne's wounds.

ELIZABETH
I told him that I am a godly woman
and that if he ever laid a hand on
me again I would leave him.

ANNE
You're a braver woman than I.

ELIZABETH
Beating is for discipline. For
children. For niggers.

Elizabeth gently brings the cloth to Anne's face.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
And I am neither.

Anne nods.

63 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT

63

Alice is asleep and snoring. Mary is asleep too.

Lena, Helen, and Clara are getting situated in their cots.

Lena looks in Clara's direction.

LENA
Clara?

CLARA
Hm?

LENA
Can you tell me another one of your
stories?

Helen looks up and listens.

CLARA
Mhm chile I'm tired, go to sleep.

Lena turns toward Clara.

LENA
Please?

Helen looks at Clara.

Clara sighs.

CLARA
Fine. One.

Lena giddily turns over toward Clara. Helen rolls over too.

CLARA (CONT'D)
You want a happy story or a scary
story?

Lena looks at Helen, as if she may have some input.

LENA
Scary!

Helen rolls her eyes, but takes her blanket and scoots a little closer so she can hear.

Clara leans in, with a voice made for storytelling.

CLARA
When my daddy was a boy, him and two more boys run away from the master 'cause he whipped 'em so bad. They set out and walked till it got darker, and darker, till they saw a big old empty house sittin' back from the road. Now this house was 3 or for miles away from any other house. All by itself.

Helen and Lena listen.

CLARA (CONT'D)
So they went in a made a fire, and laid down 'cause they was tired from running from the Patrollers. Soon, they heard somethin' say *tip...tap...tip...tap...* down the stairs it grew louder and louder

(MORE)

CLARA (CONT'D)

Then it said,
(switches to a high pitched
eerie voice)

"Oh Lordy Master, I ain't goin' to
do it no more! Let me off this
time."

Lena and Helen sit closer together now, wide-eyed at the story.

CLARA (CONT'D)

After a while they heard this same
noise like a house fallin in. And
they hear the same words. "Oh Lordy
Master, I ant goin do it no more.
Let me off this time."

Them boys got good and scared, they
looked at each other and ran away
from that house jest as fast as
they could go. Nobody knowed why
this old house wuz hanted, but my
daddy believed that some slaves wuz
killed in it. So when you walk past
a house, and you hear *tip tap*, its
them boys trapped inside.

Clara comes out of character a bit, and smirks at how she's
got the girls spooked. She pauses.

CLARA (CONT'D)

You know I remember a story bout
witches now come to think.

Lena's eyes widen.

CLARA (CONT'D)

I once heard, a woman das a witch
come to a house one night and took
her all skin off and went through
de key hole.

Helen looks squeamish. Lena's wide-eyed at this image.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Somebody found de skin an'
sprinkled salt on it an' when the
witch come out she couldn't git in
de skin an' she started saying
(witchy voice)

"Skinny, Skinny, don't you know
me?"

(MORE)

CLARA (CONT'D)
 The old folks b'lieved that any
 house a person died in was
 "haunted" and that the dead
 person's spirit was a witch that
 would come back at night. They can
 do terrible things.

LENA
 Like what?

CLARA
 Some say they boil a black cat and
 do things with its bones to make it
 so nobody every bother them. So
 that people can't see them. Das all
 I know.

Lena processes this.

Clara studies her.

CLARA (CONT'D)
 (to Lena)
 You think there's a witch following
 you?

Helen looks at Lena too.

The three of them jump at the sound of Mary's voice.

MARY
 If ya'll don't close them eyes this
 instant!

The girls glance at each other and hurry to their cots. Helen
 eyes Lena as they all lie down.

Mary kisses her teeth and rolls over. They each lie in their
 cot, smirking as they close their eyes.

64 EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - MORNING

64

Morning dew on blades of grass as a carriage pulls in front
 of the Big House.

65 INT. BIG HOUSE FOYER - MORNING

65

Lena watches Elizabeth and Clara help Anne down the stairs,
 her face much less swollen than the night before.

66

EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - AT THE SAME TIME

66

The horse and carriage is driven by a BLACK MAN (40s) sitting outside in front of the porch. Master Henry and presumably TOM BAYLOR (30s, white, more rugged than Henry), are having a drink.

HENRY

So how are things?

TOM

(charming)

Things are good...crop's doin well this year. I'm doing great. If you see me wrestling a bear, help the bear!

Henry laughs. They clink glasses.

Elizabeth and Anne arrive at the front door when Anne grabs Elizabeth's hands in hers and looks directly in her eyes.

ANNE

Thank you so much, please tell me how I can repay you for your kindness.

ELIZABETH

Don't trouble your mind with such things.

Anne eyes holds Elizabeth's gaze.

ANNE

I don't want to see his face.

ELIZABETH

No, no. Come on now. You're his wife.

Anne looks disappointed by this response, but complies.

Elizabeth escorts her to the porch with a smile. Tom walks toward her, Elizabeth subtly watches the interaction closely.

TOM

(kisses Anne on the cheek)

I was so worried about you.

Anne does her best to play along.

TOM (CONT'D)

(to Elizabeth)

Elizabeth you look lovely as usual.

Elizabeth gives him a genuine smile.

ELIZABETH
(to Henry)
Darling why don't you help Anne
into the car?

HENRY
Of course.

Henry and Anne walk ahead to the carriage when Elizabeth loops her arm in his and walks with him toward the carriage. Her warmth toward him still intact.

ELIZABETH
Tom.

TOM
Hmm?

ELIZABETH
Do you know Sheriff Samuel Roll?

TOM
Yes, I believe I met him at your
Christmas party last year.

ELIZABETH
Yes! He and Henry are old friends.

They're almost at the carriage.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(voice drops)
So if you lay another finger on
Annabelle-

Tom grows uncomfortable with her candor.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I will make sure you are thrown in
a cell where no one can hear you
holler what you did or did not do.

Tom says nothing, Elizabeth takes a step back to allow him to get into the carriage.

Henry closes the door and the carriage pulls off.

Elizabeth smiles and waves.

67 EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - DAY

67

Clara, Lena, and Helen walk across the yard toward the Big House.

Luke crosses their path.

LUKE
Hello Clara!

Clara cuts eyes at Luke.

CLARA
Hi Luke.

The girls continue walking as Luke's eyes follow her.

They giggle as they enter the Big House.

68 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

68

Alice is in the kitchen kneading bread. Lena enters, grabs the water bucket by the door.

LENA
Gone to get some water for the house Ms. Alice.

ALICE
(reacts to the initiative)
Alright baby.

69 EXT. FIELD - AFTERNOON

69

Lena walks across the field past the well, swinging her bucket.

70 EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

70

She reaches a section of the woods, she looks around her.

Her feet brush through the grass as she takes a few steps.

LENA
(to herself)
One...two...three...

Lena arrives to where she thinks The Woman's hatch is. She hops above an area. Not it.

She takes a couple steps over, she stops.

Her feet hop again, definitely landing on more pliable ground. She crouches down, and knocks on the surface below her. She steps off, waits.

No answer.

She knocks again, harder this time. And steps away.

The hatch swings open. Lena jumps back. She climbs down, shutting it behind her.

71 INT. HATCH - AFTERNOON

71

The Woman is standing in front of Lena, with a bundle of straw in her hand.

WOMAN
Anybody see you?

LENA
No.

WOMAN
Where do they think you are?

LENA
Getting water.

WOMAN
So we don't have much time.

Lena offers her a smile, and extends her hand.

LENA
I'm Lena.

WOMAN
Sit down.

Lena sits quickly.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
If you come here to use this on
other folk you got another thing
coming.

LENA
No ma'am.

The Woman stares Lena down, searching for honesty in her eyes.

WOMAN
Stick out your hands.

Lena extends them out parallel in front of her.

WHACK!

The Woman strikes Lena's arms with the reed. Lena jumps in shock, looking at the Woman as if she'd been tricked.

LENA
Ow! What you do-

WOMAN
Hmm...

WHACK! Even harder this time. The candles on the shelves in the dirt wall start to shake.

Lena tries to pull away but she's not quick enough. **WHACK!**

The candle rises and falls off the shelf and breaks in two. The flame goes out. Before Lena can notice this, The Woman raises the bundle of straw to strike her again.

Lena's brow furrows above her fierce eyes.

As the Woman brings her hand down, the reed slips through her hand, and remains levitating in the air.

Lena breathes heavily glaring at the Woman.

Around Lena and the Woman, are household items floating mid-air.

Lena notices the floating reed, then looks around her, long enough to catch the other items floating in the air: a spoon, the wood from her fire pit, a pot...

They all fall to the ground around them.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
That right there. Can't happen.

Lena looks at the items on the ground around them.

The Woman grabs the wooden spoon.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Look.

The Woman's expression is very focused, as a wooden spoon rises from the ground and levitates between her and Lena.

LENA
How you do that so easy?

WOMAN
It ain't easy.

The spoon slowly and softly returns to the ground.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Now you.

Lena composes herself. Squints hard at the spoon.

The spoon twitches on the ground, but it doesn't rise. Lena exhales in frustration.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Don't get mad. Try again.

Lena refocuses her attention on the spoon.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Take all that light. That fire you
feel in ya blood and push it out.
Wrap it around the spoon. And lift
it.

The spoon remains still. It twitches. Flips over. Then slowly and shakily rises in front of Lena's now grinning face.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Hold on now, you're not done. Now
bring it back down.

The spoon shakily falls then plops on the ground.

Lena quickly throws her self into The Woman's arms for a hug, surprising the Woman.

LENA
Thank you.

The Woman pauses, then embraces Lena in return.

WOMAN
You're welcome.

Lena walks back toward the Big House.

Ben is by the barn, feeding a horse. He watches Lena go by.

The field slaves are out. Picking in the distance.

Lena looks on.

Her eyes fall on her mother's figure. Lena watches her for a moment. Then walks on.

73 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

73

Lena is helping Alice make ginger cakes. Alice takes a floury hand and brushes some flour on Lena's nose. Lena laughs.

Clara is sweeping the floor.

ALICE

(to Lena)

This here is what I make best.
And the swirl on top lets you know
this is Alice's ginger cakes.

Lena smiles.

There's a knock on the door, it opens.

Luke shyly enters, holding something behind his back.

LUKE

Afternoon Ms. Alice, Little Lena.

(looks and smiles at Clara)

Clara.

Lena smirks at Luke's grin just for Clara.

LUKE (CONT'D)

(to Alice)

Just came to pick up the clothes
for the new hands.

ALICE

Mhm, right in that basket there.
Bring it back in the morning
Mary'll be wanting it.

LUKE

Sure, sure. Uh, these is for you
Clara.

Luke pulls from behind his back a humble but lovely bunch of yellow coneflowers.

Clara eyes him, and says nothing.

Alice eyes tell Clara not to be rude.

Clara takes the flowers.

CLARA
Thank you.

Awkward silence.

LUKE
Alright now.

Luke backs through the doorway from whence he came. The door shuts.

The women don't yet resume their work.

The door re-opens, Luke hastily grabs the basket he came for.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Okay bye now.

The door closes shut.

The women start laughing.

Mary enters the kitchen.

ALICE
Girl why won't you be nice to that
poor man!

Clara rolls her eyes.

MARY
Who, Luke? That man has eyes for
Clara since he first seent her!

CLARA
Mm-mm! His ears too small.

ALICE
His ears too small?!

CLARA
Everybody know that a man with
small ears don't want nothin more
for himself than food in his belly
and a place to lay his head.

MARY
And a piece of Clara-pie!

Lena watches as Clara playfully hits Mary on the arm.

CLARA

Oh hush!

ALICE

"Everybody knows" . . . don't nobody
 know this foolishness you be making
 up!

Lena laughs along, when a cow bell rings outside.

Alice, Mary, and Clara halt.

Lena still has a smile on, not knowing the significance.

Lena watches them eye one another, put down what they're
 doing and head through the house.

Lena follows them, confused.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Lord have mercy...

Lena, Mary, and Clara and the rest of the house slaves arrive
 at the porch.

74

EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

74

Right in front of the house is a gorgeous oak tree. The field
 slaves are gathered near it.

Being tied to that tree is James the Blacksmith, shirtless,
 torn up pants and no shoes. He has a black eye and already
 looks badly beaten up.

Helen stands next to Lena. Her eyes are fearfully fixed on
 James.

CLARA

(whispers to Mary)

Who is that?

LENA

(whispers)

That's James.

Lena looks for her mother in the group of field slaves. She
 locks eyes with her.

Luke joins the group, his sweet grin nowhere to be found.

CLOSE ON James' wrists tied above his head.

CLARA
What'd he do?

MARY
I don't kno-

CRACK! Lena and Mary jump.

We continue to hear the crack of the whip against James, but observe only the reactions to the scene.

A Black Face grimaces.

A Black Face of indifference.

CRACK

Elizabeth takes another sip of her tea. Another. She rises.

Lena's eyes follow Elizabeth as she casually walks inside and signals Clara to follow her.

Lena's eyes fall on a BLACK WOMAN on her knees, who looks on, her body hunched. Is that his mother?

A Black Face of Numbness.

CRACK

A Black Face looks down to the ground.

A line of the House Women look on, stoically.

Except for Lena. *CRACK* She stifles a jump.

Elizabeth's tea set is next to Lena. Which is now quivering.

Master Henry is tiring out. He breathes a little heavier. He holds the whip over to his left, signaling the overseer to take over.

The tea set continues to quiver while Lena looks on. The sound of the shaking catches Helen's eye. She looks at it for a moment when the overseer takes the whip and lands his first lash on James, pulling her attention back to the scene.

CRACK

Lena's eyes follow Master Henry as he uses a handkerchief to wipe speckles of blood off of his face.

HENRY
(to the Overseer)
Finish.

The House Slaves keep their eyes off of him as he passes into the Big House.

MARY

Come on.

The House Slaves walk back into the house, Helen pauses to notice that the tea set is still again.

75 INT. BIG HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

75

Lena walks past the living room, where Elizabeth sits in her chair, reading. Lena watches as Henry approaches her.

SLOW MOTION:

Henry stands there, leans forward to give Elizabeth a kiss on her cheek. She smiles at him, places her hand on his chest. His shirt, still speckled with blood.

Lena watches this moment with curiosity.

76 EXT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

76

Alice, Clara, and Helen are doing the dishes. Lena is in and out of the kitchen, coming and going. It would appear that dinner-time wasn't too long ago.

ALICE

How his Mama holdin' up?

CLARA

Holdin' up?
(her voice drops down to a
whisper)
Massa won't even let her-

The dialogue halts as the door opens. It's only Lena walking in with dirty dishes.

CLARA (CONT'D)

(still in a whisper)

Massa won't even let nobody take
down his body yet.

Lena hears this, she turns towards the only window; her back to the other house girls. A dark silhouette can be made-out, still hanging from the tree. The stack of plates in Lena's arms are levitating out of her hands.

Lena sees this, and quickly grabs them before anyone sees. A plate slips, they may fall.

She's got it.

ALICE

Lord have mercy bring those plates
here baby.

Helen eyes Lena with suspicion as she brings the plates to Alice.

77

EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - NIGHT

77

Lena stands outside the door that leads to the kitchen. It's really dark.

She sees James' silhouette hanging by his wrists from the tree. His head bowed.

Lena holds a bucket of water in one hand. Her other hand fidgets with a small gourd. She takes a step toward James, the ground crinkling underneath her foot.

Lena leaps back against the house at the sight of John the Overseer walking past James toward the slave cabin, gulping a bottle of alcohol.

Lena thinks to herself, she crouches down to the ground, and scoops the water into the gourd. Lena extends her arm out holding the gourd. It shakily leaves Lena's hand toward James.

The gourd quivers and floats in the air. Lena squints and extends her hand with concentration with the gourd tilts left and spills all the water in it.

Lena sighs in frustration and the gourd PLOPS to the ground.

78

EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION CABINS - AT THE SAME TIME

78

John the overseer turns back at the sound.

79

EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - AT THE SAME TIME

79

Lena moves in the dark to retrieve the gourd and retreats to the wall of the Big House to refill it.

Lena outstretches her arm once again, the gourd leaving her fingertips. The gourd shakily floats across, meeting James.

James' eyes are both swollen shut, he wakes at the touch of the gourd to his cheek.

Lena stands in the dark, extending her hands with great focus.

James sips with great thirst. After a few moments the gourd sways to the ground. James turns his head to the sound of footsteps.

JAMES
Who's there?

Lena picks up the gourd.

LENA
It's Lena, Mistuh James.

Lena looks over James' bruised and abused face. Yet, you see James looks moved by her gesture.

JAMES
Thank you little Lena.

crunch Lena looks up at the sound.

The ground crunches underneath John's boots.

John re-approaches the area, looking around.

He sees no one but James.

80 EXT. BIG HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME

80

The door to the kitchen closes quietly.

81 INT. BIG HOUSE, BABY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

81

Elizabeth sits in a sofa chair, reading to baby Joseph, while Lena stands and fans them, listening as well.

ELIZABETH
"If a pig wore a wig. What could we say?

Elizabeth sees that Joseph is sound asleep. She pauses. She looks up at Lena who is dozing off. She watches Lena for a moment.

Elizabeth looks back the book.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Treat him as a gentleman, and say
'Good Day'.

Elizabeth looks back at Lena, who is now completely asleep, leaning against the sofa chair. Her cheek smushed against the chair, mouth slightly open.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
If his tail chanced to fail.

Elizabeth places baby Joseph in the crib. She walks over to Lena.

Elizabeth stands inches away from Lena, watching her curiously.

She lifts sleeping Lena into her arms.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
What could we do?

In Elizabeth's arms, Lena's eyes open, realizing what's happening. Then her eyes soften, allowing it.

Elizabeth gently places Lena in her reading chair. Elizabeth lays a blanket over Lena. Lena sleepily shuffles in the chair, getting more comfortable.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Send for a tailoress, to get one new."

Lena's sleepy POV of Elizabeth as she walks away, the image blurs as Elizabeth closes the door behind her.

82 INT. BIG HOUSE, BABY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 82

Lena wakes in the reading chair. She looks out the window to see that it's still the middle of the night.

83 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT 83

Lena enters the attic of sleeping house slaves. She sees that Helen lies in her cot, the only one awake, staring at the ceiling. Their eyes meet at the sound of the floorboards creaking under Lena's feet.

Lena looks away and gets into her cot.

84 EXT. BELMONT COTTON PLANTATION - MORNING 84

The sun has barely reached its height. The field slaves are picking cotton.

85	INT. BIG HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME	85
	Elizabeth writes a letter.	
86	INT. BIG HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME	86
	Henry entertains 2 WELL DRESSED MEN (white, 30s) in his study.	
87	INT. KITCHEN - AT THE SAME TIME	87
	Alice is in the kitchen, Helen helps her pickle meats.	
	Lena enters, grabs the bucket and leaves.	
88	INT. HATCH - MORNING	88
	The Woman and Lena are sitting in her candlelit hatch. Lena's hands on her lap, palms up.	
	WOMAN What you think of the Big House?	
	Lena shrugs and shakes her head.	
	LENA Everything is fine till it ain't.	
	Lena thinks to herself, her eyes start to well up.	
	Any item near her is moving away from her body, like the energy around her is pulsating out of her.	
	The Woman eyes this.	
	WOMAN What you thinkin' about?	
	LENA My mama.	
	WOMAN Hmm. (pauses) I want you to take some deep breaths. In...	
	Lena breathes in.	
	WOMAN (CONT'D) Out...	

Lena exhales.

The items around them start to quiver, less, and less, till they stop altogether.

WOMAN (O.C) (CONT'D)
Good.

LENA
So...

The Woman places a glass bottle on the ground.

WOMAN
Lift and hold.

Lena takes a moment to understand what she means. She concentrates on the bottle, using her hand to levitate it.

LENA
How long you lived here?

The bottle rises.

The Woman ignores the question.

WOMAN
Now hold.

Lena tries to keep the bottle in one place.

The dirty green bottle more so bounces in the air.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Concentrate.

The bottle bounces. Less...even less...until its still.

LENA
Ha!

As Lena exclaims the bottle flies left and breaks.

Lena's face evolves from joy to "whoops".

LENA (CONT'D)
Sorry...

The Woman sighs.

Lena moves to clean up the pieces.

LENA (CONT'D)
So how long?

WOMAN
(dismissively)
I don't know. A long time.

Lena looks annoyed at this response. The Woman notices.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
I used my power. And someone died.
So I had to run.

89 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

89

Dinner has just ended.

Clara brings dishes in from the dining room.

Helen brings in more dishes through the swinging door, balancing one too many in her arms. The door bumps Helen's back ever so slightly. A plate in the pile of dishes shifts, causing the teacup on top of it to turn over and fall. It shatters on the floor.

The women look up in alarm, Lena watches panic wash over Helen's body. Frozen.

Lena moves quickly to pick up the pieces.

We hear footsteps coming from the dining room. Helen looks terrified.

Elizabeth enters through the same swing door. Helen does her best to compose herself.

ELIZABETH
What was that?

Helen's eyes are wide, looking away from Elizabeth.

Silence. Lena looks at the other women.

Lena sees Clara stare down Helen. Clara opens her mouth to speak-

LENA (O.S.)
It was me Missus.

Lena takes care not to make direct eye contact with Elizabeth.

LENA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I was carrying the dishes and the cup slipped. So sorry Missus.

Elizabeth studies her for a moment.

ELIZABETH
Don't let it happen again.

LENA
(head bowed)
Yes Missus.

Elizabeth exits.

The women look at Lena in surprise. Helen gives her a thankful glance.

90 EXT. BELMONT COTTON PLANTATION - NIGHT

90

The plantation is quiet. There is a warm light coming from the kitchen window.

91 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

91

Alice, Mary, Helen, Clara, Ben, and Lena are all in the kitchen. They eat scraps while Lena helps Alice clean.

Ben tells them a story of something funny that happened in-town.

There's humorous banter amongst them all. Their laughter is beautiful. Even Helen laughs a bit, which makes Lena smile.

92 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT

92

Lena is sleeping amongst the other house slaves. She wakes up and quietly gets out of her cot. Alice stirs.

ALICE
(whispers sleepily)
Where you goin'?

LENA
Outhouse.

Alice nods and goes back to sleep.

Lena notices Helen isn't in her cot.

93 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

93

Lena lights a small oil lamp and walks through the back door of the kitchen.

94

INT. OUTHOUSE - NIGHT

94

Lena sleepily squats in the wooden outhouse. There are cracks through the wooden panels, moonlight slices some of the darkness.

The oil lamp is on the dirt ground, its orange glow lights her face. One elbow on her knee, Lena's hand is smushed against her cheek.

CRACKLE.

Lena jumps as something moves past the outhouse, breaking up the sheets of moonlight. Lena finishes up. She grabs the oil lamp.

95

EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - CONTINUOUS

95

Lena walks toward the Big House, watchful of her surroundings.

Her eyes fall on the Blacksmith's work cabin.

The door is ajar. Did she see it move? Lena looks back at the Big House then back at the cabin.

She walks toward the cabin, careful not to make any noise. She stands in front of the open door for a moment and pauses. She enters, holding the small oil lamp into the darkness.

A hand comes in from behind her and covers her mouth. The other hand: a knife to her throat.

The lamp's glow reveals a YOUNG BOY (Black, 14, strong build) with an intense gaze.

YOUNG BOY

I don't wanna hurt you. But I will
if you make a sound.

Lena remains still, wide-eyed.

YOUNG BOY (CONT'D)

Will you?

Lena shakes her head no. The Young Boy slowly releases her.

The orange glow of her oil lamp and the knife pointed at her take up the space between them.

LENA

You that runaway.

The boy nods.

Silence. They study each other for a moment.

LENA (CONT'D)
You can't stay here. Everybody is
lookin' for you.

YOUNG BOY
I know.

Lena looks down at Koi's tattered pants. They're soaked. He has cuts on his face. Hair a mess. He looks exhausted.

The boy picks up on Lena's observation.

YOUNG BOY (CONT'D)
The dogs almost caught me. Had to
stay in the river for two days.

Lena takes that information in, impressed. But Lena notices his hand is shaky as he holds the knife. His eyes afraid.

YOUNG BOY (CONT'D)
You got any food?

LENA
(pauses)
They'll notice if I take anything.

Koi nods, understanding. He finally drops the knife.

Silence.

LENA (CONT'D)
I'm Lena.

YOUNG BOY
Koi.

LENA
What kinda name is Koi?

KOI
What kinda name is Lena? Ya Massa
give you that?

Lena gives him a sharp look.

More silence.

LENA
Why'd you run?

Koi pauses. Looks at Lena.

KOI
I don't wanna die here.

Lena studies him.

KOI (CONT'D)
I gotta go. While it's still dark.

Silence. Dog barking can be heard faintly in the distance.

LENA
There's a well 2 miles south from
here. Meet me there at first light.
I know someone who can help you.

Koi hesitates.

KOI
How do I know you won't tell?

Lena thinks to herself.

LENA
You don't, I guess. Meet me there.
First light.

Koi nods, his eyes follow Lena as she leaves the cabin.

96 INT. BIG HOUSE ATTIC - NIGHT 96

Lena returns to the attic. Everyone is still asleep. Lena's brow furrows at the sight of Helen's empty cot.

Still, Lena quietly lies down and closes her eyes.

97 EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - EARLY MORNING 97

Mist over the fields of the plantation. Just before dawn.

98 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING 98

Alice is getting started in the kitchen. Clara, Mary and Helen are there putting on their aprons. Lena enters, watching them.

LENA
Good mornin'

CLARA
Good mornin'

ALICE
Mornin' baby

MARY
Mornin'

Helen acknowledges her. Lena coolly walks toward the empty water bucket.

LENA
I'll get this filled up for you right away Ms. Alice.

ALICE
Mhm.

Helen's eyes follow Lena as she exits.

99 EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - CONTINUOUS

99

Lena walks hastily toward the woods. Blue light cools the woods.

100 EXT. FIELD/WELL - LATER

100

Lena approaches the well. There is no one in sight. She approaches carefully, starts to pump the water into the well. She looks around, she stops.

Rustle in the trees can be heard. Koi emerges.

Lena walks toward him.

LENA
I said first light.

KOI
I was here. Had to be sure you was alone.

101 EXT. WOODS - MORNING

101

Lena and Koi approach the location of the Woman's hatch.

Lena hops up and down, confirming the hatch's location. Koi watches as Lena knocks on it and steps off.

The hatch door lifts and The Woman emerges. Koi's eyes widen at the sight of this, which makes Lena smirk.

WOMAN
 What are you doing here?
 (sees Koi)
 Who is that?

LENA
 He needs our help.

The Woman looks pissed.

WOMAN
 No.

LENA
 Please.
 (Lena looks pleadingly)
 They'll find him for sure.

The Woman looks at Lena, then studies Koi.

WOMAN
 (massaging her temples)
 Did anyone see you?

LENA
 No.

WOMAN
 (to Koi)
 You gon' give me trouble?

KOI
 I won't if you won't.

The Woman looks around once more.

WOMAN
 Get in.

The Woman descends.

Koi doesn't move. Lena motions him toward the hatch. He gives her a look that says "In there?"

Lena nods. Koi walks toward it.

The Woman paces in the tiny low lit space, near Lena. Koi is standing near the ladder, taking in his new candlelit surroundings.

WOMAN
(whispers)
It was real foolish bringing him
here Lena.

LENA
(looking at Koi then back
at the Woman)
They gon' kill him if they find
him.

WOMAN
And now they'll kill me too.

Lena's face reveals she hadn't thought about that.

103 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

103

Lena returns to the kitchen with the bucket. Helen sits in the chair churning butter with Lena's red ribbon in her hair.

Clara enters with a basket of vegetables.

ALICE
Good, bring that over here quick.
The Missus is in a mood today.

Lena obliges.

On cue, Elizabeth enters.

ELIZABETH
Seems like everyone prefers to move
glacially this morning.

Elizabeth inspects Alice's jars of jams. She notices the ribbon in Helen's hair.

She walks over to Helen.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
If you don't churn faster it will
spoil.

LENA
I couldn't churn any faster than
that Missus.

Alice looks up. Helen looks up. Clara looks up.

Elizabeth observes their reactions.

WHACK

ELIZABETH
You will speak when spoken to.

Lena holds the side of her face, looking down.

104 INT. WOMAN'S HATCH - DAY

104

Lena enters the hatch. Lena smirks at the sight of Koi sewing.

He smiles back and shrugs, glancing at The Woman who has just finished skinning a rabbit. The Woman wipes her hands.

WOMAN
How long we got?

LENA
Hour maybe.

WOMAN
Stand there.

Lena obeys. The Woman places two glass bottles on the ground in front of her.

Lena doesn't know what to do.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
You gon' lift it.

LENA
Two? Together?

WOMAN
Mhm.

Lena glances at Koi, whose face says: What is going on right now?

LENA
Can't we do this outside?

WOMAN
Not safe. Go on.

Lena remains hesitant. The Woman doesn't change her mind.

Lena takes in a deep breath. She uses her hand to signal the bottles' levitation. She glances at Koi's furrowed brow.

One lifts. Not the other.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Try again.

With more concentration Lena's arm extends. Still only one bottle moves.

Lena slices her arm through the air in frustration, and both bottles go flying, barely missing Koi, mouth agape.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(casually)
Hm.

KOI
How did you do that?!

WOMAN
(eyes locked on Lena)
Not now Koi.

LENA
It works better when I'm mad.

The Woman grabs a candle from one of her shelves.

WOMAN
You're not mad all the time?

Koi picks up a piece of glass from the bottle.

KOI
(under his breath)
I am.

WOMAN
Look.

The Woman holds the candle in front of Lena.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Right before that bottle flies,
what do you feel?

Lena thinks.

LENA
Hot. Tingly.

WOMAN
That feeling, and this fire.
They're the same. The *same thing*.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 You gotta gather all that. That
 extra feelin' you feel in your
 skin?

Lena nods.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 From your stomach. From your legs.
 From your chest. And push it out.
 Make it bigger.

Koi watches Lena.

Lena considers this.

FLASHBACK TO:

105 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

105

Slow motion:

Lena watches Elizabeth kissing Henry's cheek, his shirt
 speckled with blood.

106 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

106

Slow motion:

Helen's solemn expression as she runs a warm cloth down
 Elizabeth's naked shoulder.

CUT TO:

107 INT. WOMAN'S HATCH - PRESENT

107

Lena takes a deep breath. Her eyes fierce.

In her eyes' reflection, we see fire growing.

The Woman watches as Lena's hands surround the candle, the
 size of the flame is huge.

Lena releases, the flame returns to its normal size.

The Woman smiles, she grabs two bottles, and places them in
 front of Lena.

Both bottles lift with ease.

Koi's eyes are wide. Lena looks self-satisfied, though a little tired. The Woman nods.

WOMAN

Good.

The Woman returns to her skinned rabbit.

Koi's face of disbelief.

108 EXT. FIELD - LATER

108

Koi and Lena are walking toward the well. The sky holds hues of pink and blue.

LENA

I've always been like this. I just didn't know I could do anything about it.

KOI

So you's a witch.

LENA

(snaps)

I'm not a witch!

KOI

Sorry.

Silence.

They continue walking.

KOI (CONT'D)

My papa told me that there's powerful women where we come from. Before the boats.

Lena listens.

KOI (CONT'D)

He said they powerful. Could see things. Know things. Move things. I can't remember what they was called. But maybe you's like that.

Lena nods, appreciating his theory.

LENA

Where's yo Papa now?

KOI
Dead.

Koi's eyes meet hers.

LENA
Then you ran.

Koi neither confirms nor denies.

LENA (CONT'D)
Mines dead too.

They arrive to the well, Lena ropes the bucket down. Koi's eyes stay aware of his surroundings. Lena notices this.

LENA (CONT'D)
You mighty brave to be out here
like this.

KOI
They expect us to run at night. But
I still gotta be careful. But I
needed the air. I don't know how
that lady does it.
(pauses)
What's her name?

LENA
She never tell me.

Lena slowly pulls the bucket up the well.

KOI
I wish I had what you had.

LENA
Why?

KOI
You can do anything! You can bring
that bucket up without even
touching it! Why don't you? Nothing
can get in your way.

LENA
You know that's not true.

Koi waits for her to go on.

LENA (CONT'D)
You got everybody in the state
lookin' for you. I'm one girl!
(MORE)

LENA (CONT'D)
 Who cares if I can move a bottle if
 a hundred white folk is tryna kill
 me?

Lena unties the bucket and lifts it from the well.

KOI
 Still. You got more than me. And
 you won't even try.

LENA
 Try to what?

KOI
 Fight.

109 EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - DAY

109

Lena is close to the Big House. A slave is chopping wood on a stump nearby. Near the entrance to the kitchen are two white men on horses. Lena recognizes one of them.

Slave Traders.

Lena keeps her eyes down, as she tries to move undetected.

The Slave Trader notices her.

SLAVE TRADER
 (to Lena)
 You girl. Bring that water here.

Lena looks at the kitchen entrance, then back at them. She brings the bucket of water over.

John the overseer approaches them as they take a sip of water. John pulls along a resistant field slave, Hattie, by her arm. She's no longer pregnant.

Lena takes a step back from the scene. Something else catches Lena's eye.

The flutter of a curtain through a window in the Big House. Elizabeth stands there looking on.

JOHN
 Paperwork's done?

SLAVE TRADER
 Yes, Sir.

JOHN
 Good, here ya go.

Hattie manages to slip from John's grip.

She runs to the stump where the slave was chopping wood.
Grabs his axe.

Lena's eyes widen as we hear a loud *CRACK*.

Hattie turns back to John and the Slave Traders. Her wrist, bloody and handless.

Tears stream down Hattie's face.

HATTIE
You gon' sell me now?

Lena looks on in horror. She looks back up at the window, Elizabeth remains in the window. Watching.

110 EXT. SLAVE CABINS - MORNING

110

Lena walks on the plantation. She holds something in a cloth napkin. The Big House is far behind her. Cotton field alongside her. She walks past a clearing where a "church" service is being held by one of the field slaves. The singing of hymns.

Lena arrives at a cabin and knocks on the door. A grin emerges on Lena's face as Grace opens the door. She yanks Lena into her arms.

111 INT. GRACE'S CABIN - MORNING

111

Lena hands Grace the napkin. Grace opens it, revealing two pieces of fresh bread.

LENA
From Ms. Alice.

GRACE
Thank you baby. Let's eat it together.

LENA
No, no that's for you Mama.

GRACE
Hush. Ain't nothin' I'd rather do.

Lena and Grace sit at their small wooden table. They savor their first bite of bread.

GRACE (CONT'D)
So how are you baby?

LENA
I'm good.

GRACE
Has anyone seen your...

LENA
No...

GRACE
Lena..

Lena looks into her mother's face.

LENA
No mama, no one at the house has
seen me.

Grace scans Lena's eyes. Pauses.

GRACE
The Missus ever put her hands on
you?

LENA
(cockily)
Once. I'm alright.

GRACE
Don't get big in there. She is not
to be messed with.

Lena nods with a little disregard.

LENA
Can I show you somethin?

Lena takes a deep breath, and extends her index finger.

Grace's eyes watch her piece of bread rise from the table,
and twirl. It's lovely.

LENA (CONT'D)
I can control it now.

The bread continues to rise toward their eye-line. It twirls.

Lena is smiling, Grace is not.

GRACE
Where you learn to do that?

LENA
I been practicin'.

GRACE
Practicin'. Why?

The bread falls to the table.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Lena this can get you killed. Don't
you understand that?

LENA
But Mama I can control it now.

GRACE
I don't care.

Grace's frustration grows.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Have you learned nothin in that
house? Have you seen nothin?!

Grace looks at her child, at a loss for words.

Lena's eyes study Grace's fear.

112 INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

112

Helen and Lena are preparing the Master bedroom. Helen notices Lena is a little quiet but says nothing. Helen places a warming pan in the bed.

LENA
Helen

Helen looks at her.

LENA (CONT'D)
You ever think about...leavin'?

Helen's eyes widen at her words and she closes the bedroom door.

Lena continues, whispering.

LENA (CONT'D)
Or standin' up?

Helen gives her a look that says "Stop talking!"

LENA (CONT'D)
to Missus Elizabeth?

Helen's gaze is intense.

Mary opens the door. Their eye contact breaks.

Mary senses she's walked in on something.

MARY
Alice is ready for y'all to start
on dinner.

Helen quickly exits.

Mary looks at Lena. Lena shrugs.

113 EXT. WOMAN'S HATCH - NIGHT

113

Lena walks toward the Woman's hatch. Her head tilts at the sight of the hatch door that's been left ajar.

Lena quickens her pace. She cautiously descends.

114 INT. WOMAN'S HATCH - CONTINUOUS

114

(O.C.) FEMALE VOICE:
You had no right...

Lena recognizes this voice. Still going down the ladder-

The voice is Grace's.

Grace and the Woman stand face to face, and appear to be arguing.

Koi sits in the corner, engaged but staying out of it. He sees Lena. Grace and The Woman do not.

GRACE
(to The Woman)
You had no right-

WOMAN
Watch yo mouth. I am still your mother-

Lena processes the word "mother". She looks at the Woman, searches her memory.

GRACE (O.S.)
She is MY child!

Lena examines her peculiar mentor.

LENA
Grammy Mabel?

They don't hear her. Mabel and Grace are still going at it.

MABEL
(to Grace)
What was your plan? Hm?

GRACE
It ain't safe-

MABEL
This ain't somethin' you hide and
it go away.

GRACE
You know all about hiding.

MABEL
Cause you won't run.

Lena takes in all this new information.

GRACE
(to Mabel)
So TEACHIN' her is yo idea of
fixin?

Grace looks at Koi.

GRACE (CONT'D)
And him?! Are you crazy? If they
find you or Lena with this boy
you's DEAD.
You's dangerous! I don't want Lena
anywhere near-

Grace follows Koi's gaze. She sees Lena.

LENA
(to Grace)
How could you not tell me?

Koi watches Lena. He eyes Mabel's house items shaking in the room.

Grace moves toward Lena.

GRACE
I was just tryna protect you.

LENA

By lying? You told me Gramma was dead! That there was no one like me! I thought I was sick! Or...or evil!

Lena looks into her mother's face.

LENA (CONT'D)

But you's the one who's evil. You's the liar.

Mabel's eyes widen.

MABEL

Lena-

Grace takes a step toward Lena. Lena uses her powers to smash a bottle on the ground between them.

This scares Grace.

Lena leaves.

Grace and Mabel look at one another.

115 EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

115

Lena storms across the field.

Koi tries to catch up to Lena.

KOI

Lena.

LENA

Go away.

KOI

Come on. I'm sure they got a good reason-

Koi's body lurches back and is pushed to the ground.

Lena stands with her hands raised, glaring at him.

LENA

Leave me alone!

Koi sits in the grass, stunned.

116 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

116

Lena enters. Alice is prepping for tomorrow morning. Lena walks right past her.

ALICE
Where you been?

Lena has no response.

ALICE (CONT'D)
What's wrong with you?

LENA
I'm fine.

Alice studies her face.

ALICE
Go on upstairs.

117 INT. BIG HOUSE STAIRS - NIGHT

117

Lena walks upstairs.

118 INT. BIG HOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

118

Lena walks to the bedroom door. Lena pauses. Warm glow of light coming through the crack in the door onto Lena's face.

Lena peers in. Elizabeth is kneeled on the ground in a white night gown. Hair unpinned and down. Head down.

HENRY (O.C.)
End of discussion.

The click of an oil lamp.

Elizabeth remains there for a moment. In less light.

Lena watches her helpless posture. She stares at the ground. She looks to the door.

Elizabeth looks up and catches Lena.

Lena quickly moves away from the door.

119 INT. BIG HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

119

Lena is sweeping the floor of the baby's bedroom. A brown hand grabs her arm, it's Helen.

LENA

Ow!

Helen pulls her forcefully by the arm down the stairs.

LENA (CONT'D)

What is it?

Lena tries to pull away from her but Helen holds on.

LENA (CONT'D)

Helen!

They arrive to the doorway that leads to the porch, sunlight falling into the house from it.

120 EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

120

Through the doorway comes Helen and Lena. Helen finally releases her.

Lena's eyes fall on something in front of her that we cannot yet see. Her eyes widen.

Grace, is being loaded into the back of a horse-driven wagon. Her wrists are chained together.

LENA

Mama!

Grace looks up at the sound of Lena's voice. Pain in her eyes as she is roughly seated by a SLAVE SELLER (white, male, 30s) into the wagon. Lena runs toward the wagon but Alice grabs hold of her from behind, one hand on each shoulder.

LENA (CONT'D)

Where is she going? Where is she going?!

ALICE

It's okay baby. It's okay...

Lena breathes heavily. Her face desperate.

The Slave Seller casually gets onto the horse. We hear the click of his tongue and the wheels of the wagon begin to roll.

Grace's eyes are locked on Lena, like she's trying to engrave her face in her memory.

Lena's eyes dart around searching for a solution.

Lena subtly lifts her hand...

One of the wheels of the wagon slowly start to rise from the ground.

No one seems to notice this but Grace, who tilts as the wagon's wheel rises.

Grace's face grows serious. She quickly extends her arm out toward the porch, signaling Lena to stop.

Grace's palm fiercely outstretched toward Lena. Grace slowly shakes her head, "no".

Lena looks at her mother, incredulous.

Lena's stiff fingers begin to soften.

Understanding, Lena helplessly lowers her hand.

She watches her mother grow smaller down the dirt path leading out of the plantation. Smaller.

And smaller.

Alice tries to console her, but Lena pulls away from her and moves toward the doorway, but not before her eyes fall on Elizabeth, who sits, content on the porch.

Elizabeth has not a drop of surprise on her face.

This was her doing.

Elizabeth casually returns Lena's gaze.

Lena re-enters the house.

121 INT. BIG HOUSE, BABY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

121

Lena runs upstairs. She enters a bedroom and closes the door behind her.

She erratically paces the room.

Her breathing quick and deep.

She paces back toward the baby's crib, and finds baby Joseph is sitting up now, awake.

Lena stares at Joseph. His blue eyes. His blonde hair.

Lena takes a step toward the crib. Her face holds a debate in her head.

Lena picks up the baby. And moves to the window.

She holds him close, and looks through the window down below.

She takes another look at the baby boy.

He's unknowing. No awareness. Still innocent. His blue eyes, look up at her brown face.

Lena takes a deep exhale and quickly puts the baby back in the crib.

She crouches down, head between her knees, hands squeezing her hair.

Alice and Helen enter the room. Alice's eyes widen. Helen puts her hand over her mouth.

Lena is crouched down on the ground against the wall. All of the furniture is levitating around her. The chandelier swings violently above them.

Including baby Joseph in the crib.

Helen looks frightened, she turns to leave, Alice stops her.

Alice slowly moves toward Lena.

ALICE
Lena...

Lena is sobbing.

Alice cautiously places her hand on Lena's shoulder.

ALICE (CONT'D)
It's gonna be alright baby....it's
gon' be alright...

Alice gets down on the ground with Lena, and takes her little body in her arms and rocks her.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry baby...shhhh...

Helen watches as the furniture gets lower and lower.

THUD.

They finally drop to the ground. Only a chair falls to its side. Loudly.

Baby Joseph laughs.

Helen is still processing all this.

Lena wipes her face and looks up at Alice. Alice looks at her with a knowing.

Elizabeth enters.

ELIZABETH
What was that sound?

ALICE
Sound, Missus?

Elizabeth studies the three of them.

ELIZABETH
Leave us.

Alice and Helen make eye contact. They hesitantly exit.

Lena stands. Wipes her face.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Shame about your mama. But that's
just the way these things go
sometime.

Lena can barely keep from glaring at the Mistress, she manages not to look directly into her eyes.

Elizabeth steps toward her.

Elizabeth's hand reaches to touch Lena's chin. Lena jumps slightly at her touch. Elizabeth notices this then gently lifts Lena's chin to look at her.

Lena's eyes meet Elizabeth's.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
It must be awful to have absolutely no family here. Even for your kind. But maybe, in some ways, I could be your family. I mean, we sleep in the same house after all.

Elizabeth offers her a small smile. Lena does not return it. If anything, she only looks at her like she's trying to figure her out.

Elizabeth drops her hand.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I do so much to make y'all happy.

Elizabeth moves toward Joseph, picking him up. She holds him close.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 Alice is downstairs in the kitchen
 preparing for my sister's arrival.
 Go'on and help her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 Now.

Lena glares at Elizabeth. Lena turns to leave.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 Lena.

Lena turns to look in her direction.

Elizabeth looks at the chair, then looks back at Lena.

Lena slowly walks to the chair, places it upright.
 Elizabeth's eyes follow her and she exits the room.

Elizabeth rocks baby Joseph in her arms, she looks up,
 noticing the chandelier is swaying just a little.

122 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN

122

Alice, Clara, Mary, Helen and Lena are preparing dinner
 silently. Helen is peeling potatoes while Lena chops them
 alongside her.

Helen watches Lena, whose face is vacant.

123 EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

123

Lena is carrying a wooden bucket, she checks her surroundings
 and lifts the door to her grandmother's hatch.

124 INT. MABEL'S HATCH - CONTINUOUS

124

Lena is coming down the ladder.

MABEL
 Wasn't expecting to see you today.

Koi is in the corner, carving something from wood. He looks
 up at Lena.

Mabel is chopping up roots. Lena just looks at her.

MABEL (CONT'D)
(not looking up)
How much time you got?

Lena says nothing. She shuffles a bit, making Mabel look up from her task.

Mabel studies Lena's face. Koi too.

MABEL (CONT'D)
What is it?

Lena takes a long pause. Her eyes searching the air. For answers. For words. For voice.

LENA
Mama...she's...gone.

It's seems Mabel and Koi know what she means by "gone". Mabel takes a breath.

Silence.

MABEL
(voice lowering)
When?

LENA
This afternoon.

MABEL
You know where?

LENA
I'm not sure. Mary thinks she heard them say Bullock.

Mabel nods. Returns to cutting.

LENA (CONT'D)
What do we do?

MABEL
Nothing.

LENA
Nothing? What you mean nothing?

Mabel doesn't answer.

LENA (CONT'D)
What you mean noth-

MABEL
What can we do Lena?

LENA
Why you been teaching me then?

Lena watches Mabel continue chopping.

LENA (CONT'D)
What's it for?

Lena's eyes plead with Mabel's. Waiting for an answer. Mabel looks away and says nothing.

Lena turns around and goes back up the ladder.

Koi watches Mabel chopping. Helplessly.

125 EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

125

Blue light from the setting Sun while Lena moves across the field.

126 EXT. BIG HOUSE - LATER

126

Sunset.

Lena is approaching the Big House.

127 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

127

Alice is in the kitchen as usual as Lena enters. Lena puts her bucket down, avoids eye contact, and tries to walk past her.

ALICE
I remember when your grandma first
showed me what she could do.

Lena whips around.

Alice takes a seat at the table with a big exhale.

ALICE (CONT'D)
When we were little girls, she
would take these big red
sunflowers,

FLASHBACK TO:

128 EXT. FIELD - DAY

128

Dreamy view of two little girls, YOUNG ALICE (9) and YOUNG MABEL (9) laughing in a flowery field. Young Mabel uses her powers to manipulate the flower. Young Alice looks dazzled by the sight.

ALICE (V.O.)
put em in her hand, and make em
look like they dancin'.

CUT TO:

129 INT. KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

129

Lena listens.

ALICE
I remember thinkin', that there was
a little bit of God in her hands.
To do somethin' so beautiful.

FLASHBACK TO:

130 EXT. FIELD - DAY

130

Young Alice and Young Mabel holding hands in the field.

CUT TO:

131 EXT. BELMONT COTTON PLANTATION - DAY

131

18-YEAR-OLD ALICE making eye contact with 18-YEAR OLD MABEL through a Big House window. A red flower rises through the air and taps the window-pane.

18-year-old Alice grins, lifting the window and taking the floating flower.

Alice is called away by the Missus, and rushedly closes the window. 18-year-old Mabel's smile fades.

CUT TO:

132 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - PRESENT

132

Alice smiles at the memory.

ALICE (V.O.)
 But then we got older. Things
 wasn't as simple no more.

FLASHBACK TO:

133 EXT. BIG HOUSE - PORCH

133

30-YEAR-OLD MABEL carries a sack of cotton from the fields. She notices 30-YEAR-OLD ALICE with a black eye, standing behind a different MISSUS (White, 30s, Elizabeth's mother).

30-YEAR-OLD MABEL and 30-YEAR-OLD ALICE make eye contact. Alice looks away.

CUT TO:

134 EXT. BELMONT COTTON PLANTATION - NIGHT

134

An older Mabel we recognize is walking at night.

Sounds of shuffling and whimpering.

MASTER GEORGE (white, Elizabeth's father) overpowering an older Alice against the wall of the Big House.

Mabel's hand being extended.

George's body being raised high into the air.

Mabel's face with rage as she brings her hand down with force. We hear a CRACK.

Mabel running away, looking back at Alice. George's limp body between them.

Alice looking back at Mabel. Alice's younger face fading into her older face in the present.

135 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT (END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE) 135

ALICE
 She saved me.

CUT TO:

136 INT. BIG HOUSE - NIGHT

136

Lena walks with Alice as she puts out all the candles in the house.

LENA
So you knew this whole time?

ALICE
No. I wondered though. Then I saw
them plates risin' from yuh
fingers.

LENA
Do you think Helen will say
somethin'?

They go up the stairs, moonlight hitting their figures.

ALICE
I don't think so. She's been a
little quiet lately, you notice?

Alice offers Lena a smile. Lena smiles back.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Just be extra careful round the
Missus. You know dat.

Lena nods.

137 INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

137

House slaves in their cots. Lena's face looks fresh from
crying.

Helen enters, eyes on Lena. Lena turns away from Helen. Helen
notices. We stay with Lena as Helen gets in her own cot.

138 INT. BIG HOUSE - LATER

138

Lena works in the kitchen with Alice. We hear excited squeals
in the distance.

139 INT. BIG HOUSE FOYER

139

Lena and Alice enter the foyer to see the commotion.

Elizabeth hurries down the stairs to find ANGELICA (30s,
white, blonde) entering the foyer. Ben is behind her carrying
her things.

ANGELICA
Hi there little sister!

The two embrace with warmth and excitement.

ELIZABETH
 Come, let's get you settled in.
 (eyes still on Angelica)
 Helen.

Angelica and Elizabeth hold hands and run upstairs while Helen helps Ben with Angelica's things.

140 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

140

Henry and Elizabeth and Angelica eat dinner. The house girls lined up against the wall.

Angelica and Elizabeth giggling with one another.

Helen stands against the wall, she watches Lena fanning the table, numbly.

141 INT. BIG HOUSE BATHROOM - NIGHT

141

Lena robotically bathes Angelica in the bathtub. Her hands move up and down her arm. The splash of her cloth dipping into the water. Angelica content being cared for.

ANGELICA
 My sister tells me you're new here.

Lena nods. Keeps washing.

ANGELICA (CONT'D)
 This was my father's plantation you know. He hoped to have a son to leave it to. But nope, just us. Elizabeth's the oldest, so.

Angelica steps out of the wash tub.

Lena helps her dry off. She takes a bottle of perfume and sprays Angelica with it.

ANGELICA (CONT'D)
 She says you're her favorite.

Angelica offers Lena a smile. Lena only looks at her.

142 INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

142

Lena lies awake in her cot. She grabs a lamp, lights it.

She turns to notice once again, Helen's cot is empty.

She goes downstairs.

143 INT. BIG HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

143

Lena walks down the hallway. Strange sounds that make Lena stop.

The sound of a bed CREAKING.

A man GRUNTING.

Lena moves to turn around but her footstep makes a loud CREAKING sound.

She freezes at the sound of a door opening down the hall.

She quickly kills the glow of her oil lamp.

It's Master Henry. He zips his trousers and quietly closes the door behind him.

He looks in Lena's direction.

But she's protected by the dark.

Lena watches him walk down the hall into the Master bedroom.

Lena waits a few moments then walks to the door from whence he came. Through the sliver of its opening she sees Helen.

Their eyes lock. Helen covers herself.

Lena quietly walks into room.

144 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

144

Lena stands there looking at Helen. Helen sits there, holding her dress to her chest, shoulders bare, looking at Lena.

Lena slowly comes closer to her. She sits down on the bed. They say nothing.

Helen looks away.

Lena watches Helen, processing what we all know just happened. Putting together what's been happening.

145 EXT. FIELD - MORNING

145

Walks away from the well, bucket full of water. A figure runs towards her.

Lena turns at the sound. It's Koi.

KOI
Lena.

Lena continues walking.

KOI (CONT'D)
We're leaving.

Lena stops.

KOI (CONT'D)
Both of us.

LENA
Why you tellin me for?

KOI
Cause you're coming with us.

Lena pauses.

LENA
No.

KOI
Your mother would want you-

LENA
My mother would want me to stay
put. Stay quiet. I didn't do that.
And now she's gone.

KOI
If you're free you can find her. If
you're here, you know you'll never
see her again.

Lena processes this.

KOI (CONT'D)
Come on, with the three of us, I
know we can make it North. We can
leave tomorrow.

Silence.

LENA
Tonight.

Koi looks at her surprised.

LENA (CONT'D)

It has to be tonight. Massa's havin
a big dinner party for all the
white folks in town. They're mind
will be elsewhere.

Koi nods.

KOI

Okay. Tonight. I'll tell the old
lady...Maybe you can come and tell
her?

Lena looks away.

LENA

You tell her. When it's all dark
I'll meet you here.

146 INT. BIG HOUSE - DAY

146

The Big House is energetic as everyone busily prepares for
tonight's dinner party.

147 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

147

Alice is hurrying around the kitchen. Helen assisting her.

148 INT. LIVING ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

148

Elizabeth orders Mary and Clara as to how to decorate and set
the dining and living room.

149 INT. DINING ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

149

Lena polishing all china, decor, and silverware.

Helen enters from the kitchen, walks toward the dining table
where Lena sits, polishing.

Helen grabs the pile of large serving plates on the table.
They make eye contact. Helen's expression is hard to read.

Lena watches Helen turn and walk back into the kitchen.

Laughter amongst Angelica, Elizabeth and Henry heard from
another room.

150 INT. BIG HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT 150

Mary scans the dining room table as Lena looks through the window.

She watches as Ben helps dinner party guests out of their carriages.

CLARA (O.S.)
Lena!

Lena turns.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Come on now!

151 INT. BIG HOUSE FOYER - NIGHT 151

Lena joins the line of house women at the foyer, prepared to welcome tonight's guests.

152 INT. BIG HOUSE - NIGHT 152

Lena watches three well dressed white women laughing and taking drinks from the serving plates of Lena and Clara, as if they're invisible.

153 EXT. PORCH - NIGHT 153

Two white men smoking cigars and drinking on the porch. One of them has his eye on Mary standing by the door.

Mary avoids eye contact.

154 INT. BIG HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT 154

Lena enters the kitchen, sees Alice wipes her sweaty brow with the back of her hand. Alice checks and re-checks the dishes before her.

Helen is washing dishes in a large basin.

Lena kneels to the floor to help Helen. She picks up a dish.

LENA
(whispers)
I'm leavin.

Helen looks up.

LENA (CONT'D)
Tonight. I'm runnin' North.

Helen's expression processes the gravity of Lena's words.

LENA (CONT'D)
Please. Come with me.

Helen stares at Lena. Thinks to herself.

LENA (CONT'D)
Please...

Helen looks away. She shakes her head no.

LENA (CONT'D)
Helen...

Helen's hands gently take the dish out of Lena's hands. She continues washing, not looking at Lena.

Lena slowly rises, takes a tray of hors d'oeuvres near Alice, and exits.

155 INT. BIG HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

155

Clara fans Elizabeth, Angelica and 3 other white women, Anne, PHOEBE (30), and SARAH (28). Lena stands holding a serving dish of hors d'oeuvres.

Lena looks out the window, it's dark outside.

MARGARET
Elizabeth what an impressive home
you have, and the food was just
divine!

ELIZABETH
Why thank you...

Lena and Clara make eye contact.

SARAH
My husband is elated about our new
nigger gal. Already she's become
the best field hand we got!

Lena looks down at her serving plate as Margaret takes the last hors d'oeuvre. Lena moves to leave the room.

PHOEBE
Where is your plantation?

SARAH
Bullock County.

Lena turns upon hearing this.

Clara looks at Lena.

Grace?

Lena stays in the room.

156 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT - AT THE SAME TIME

156

Koi sits on the ground leaning against the well. It's dark. He stands and walks toward the plantation.

157 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - AT THE SAME TIME

157

Elizabeth smiles. She glances at Lena.

SARAH
Oh you must come visit!

ELIZABETH
I'd love to!

Elizabeth eyes Lena's interested expression, then her empty tray.

SARAH
I admit, for a moment, I thought
you had deceived us!

ELIZABETH
Oh?

SARAH
Oh yes she was rather difficult
when she first arrived. Refused to
work. Eat.

The women listen. So does Lena.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Even tried to stow-away in the
driver's carriage. But my husband
figured out how to break her.

ANGELICA
How?

Sarah takes a sip of her drink.

SARAH
 (casually)
 By removing a few of her fingers, I
 think.

Clara's eyes stay on Lena. Lena looks sick.

The women's conversation happens in slow motion before Lena.

Lena looks dizzy.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 There's a science to all this. You
 have to figure out just the right
 thing to-

Sarah's glass shatters in her hand. Then Phoebe's. Then
 Anne's. Angelica's. Elizabeth's.

Angelica's eye catches the table next to her is beginning to
 rise.

The women don't have a chance to process what's happened when-

LENA
 What's her name?

158 EXT. BLACKSMITH'S CABIN - AT THE SAME TIME 158

Koi stands near the Blacksmith's cabin, he sees the Big
 House's glow in the night. Everything seems fine. *Where is
 Lena?*

Men smoking cigar's on the porch. Koi sees Tom Baylor, his
 owner, pouring himself a drink. Koi quickly conceals himself.

159 INT. BIG HOUSE LIVING ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME 159

Clara looks around her as furniture, portraits, paintings,
 and items are disheveled and levitating.

Lena's eyes move left. The low-table slides left.

Elizabeth looks disturbed as this phenomenon unfolds.
 Angelica looks at Lena in horror.

A piece of glass rises from the floor near Sarah's neck, her
 eyes widening with fear.

Lena's voice is low. She glares right into Sarah.

LENA
 What is her name?

Sarah glances at Elizabeth fearfully.

SARAH
 Eliza-

LENA
 What is her name?

The glass presses harder into Sarah's neck.

SARAH
 Uh...G..Grace...

The piece of glass at Sarah's neck falls. Lena exhales-

SLAM!

Angelica hits Lena over the head with the serving tray.

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

The cow bell rings. We know what this means.

CUT TO:

160 EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - DUSK

160

Field slaves gather by the oak tree. Whispers and mumbles. "What's goin on?" "Lord have mercy" and "That's Grace's baby" can be heard.

John the overseer shoves Lena, down the stairs. She is blindfolded and gagged. Elizabeth and Henry follow.

The house women come out, followed by their guests, some unaware of what's happened.

Alice's eyes widen at the sight of John the overseer wrapping rope around Lena's crossed wrists.

They rise above her head as John yanks the rope over the branch.

Helen notices a little blood on Sarah's neck, as Sarah stands tearfully on the porch, being consoled by Phoebe and Margaret.

161 EXT. BLACKSMITH'S CABIN - AT THE SAME TIME

161

Koi watches as Lena is dragged out of the house and tied up. Dismay washes over his expression. He backs away, and turns to leave.

162 EXT. BIG HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME

162

Alice approaches Elizabeth.

ALICE
(carefully)
Missus, what's goin' on here?

ELIZABETH
(with an intense gaze)
That girl there is a...a witch.
She's to be whipped and burned.

Helen's expression panics upon hearing this. She moves toward the oak tree. Clara grabs her arm.

Henry lights a torch.

ALICE
Missus she's just a little girl,
please Missus maybe she can-

ELIZABETH
(coldly)
One more word Alice and you can join her.

Elizabeth has never spoken to Alice this way.

The field slaves are talking amongst themselves. Faces of surprise. Frustration. Luke moves to the front of the crowd.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(speaking to everyone)
This girl is a witch. She worked with the devil and attacked us.

Helen watches. Something is building inside Helen.

Field slaves listen, some observant, some suspicious.

The overseer rips the back of Lena's dress.

Elizabeth looks on fiercely.

CRACK.

Lena screams through her gag. Alice looks away. What can they do?

John circles the whip in the air.

CRACK.

The field slaves wince as Lena's little body buckles against the blow.

The whites on the porch look on.

CRACK.

John raises his hand once again.

A figure moves quickly past Elizabeth, surprise grows on Elizabeth's face when-

Helen approaches Lena and embraces her body, and the whip lands on Helen -splitting the back of her dress open.

John looks to Henry, then Elizabeth.

Elizabeth shoots John a furious look that says, "continue".

The whip splits Helen's smooth brown back now accessible in the dress.

CRACK.

Helen winces deeply, still holding onto Lena.

Luke's brow is furrowed at this sight.

CRACK. Helen cries out.

Luke steps away from the crowd of field slaves and moves toward Helen.

He embraces Helen, who is still holding onto Lena.

John brings the whip down, more furiously than ever, now, onto Luke.

CRACK.

CRACK!

The house women look that this unprecedeted sight.

We find Hattie's (the woman who's children were sold) face in the crowd of field slaves, who angrily steps forward.

She embraces Lena from another side. Helen and Hattie make eye contact. They brace themselves. Then another field slave embraces the group.

Elizabeth can't believe her eyes.

Then another slave, then another, another...

James nods, stepping forward.

More field slaves join this huddle.

Henry and Elizabeth and John exchange looks. What do we do?

The huddle grows as more slaves of the Belmont Plantation surround Lena.

A few of them don't even keep their backs turned. They embrace them from behind, looking Elizabeth, Henry, or John right in their eyes.

There are at least 40 slaves surrounding Lena's hanging body. There are about 10 whites.

Lena is still blindfolded. Helen's face is close to hers. Lena tries to speak. Helen removes her gag.

LENA
What's goin on?

Helen speaks for the first time since Elizabeth burned her face.

HELEN
We standin' up.

Lena smirks.

Helen smiles back.

It's a standoff. White guests of the dinner party are clustered on the porch. They are outnumbered.

We fall on a few faces of house and field slaves that look uncertain where to place their allegiance.

Lena's face still close to Helen's.

LENA
Can you get me loose?

Helen looks up at the knot.

HELEN

I think so.

Elizabeth and Henry see the rage swelling in the eyes of the slaves that surround Lena.

HENRY

Now let's all calm down, and not do something that you're gonna regret.

Helen has almost got Lena's knot loose.

ELIZABETH

This is your home. Your place is here. Don't get yourself killed over one little witch girl.

The standoff remains, Elizabeth has the ear of the whites and blacks.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

She works with the devil. Now you don't want to be protecting the likes of her. This is your home.

Luke looks at John the overseer. The whip in his hand. He takes a step toward him.

BANG.

Luke's eyes widen, he and the slaves near him look down at a circle of blood growing in his belly.

On the porch, the white man who sent Lena into Henry's study looks indifferently at the smoke coming out of his handgun.

Luke drops to the ground.

Clara looks to the man who shot Luke. Her face twists as she lunges at him, tackling him to the ground.

The whites around them gasp and step back as Clara snatches the gun from the man's hand and pistol whips him in the face.

Clara stands holding the pistol and the white women flee toward their carriages.

Four black men walk toward John with the whip in his hand. John backs away slowly. He raises his hand to whip one of them. They dodge the whip's lash then tackle him to the ground.

Elizabeth backs away.

Helen finally gets Lena loose. Lena pulls the top of her dress back over her and rubs her wrists. She looks up at the chaos around her.

163 EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE BIG HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME 163

White women and a couple white men are retreating to their carriages. Ben is standing there.

Anne, Tom's wife, extends her arm to be helped into the carriage. But Ben only stands there.

ANNE
Excuse me?!

But Ben looks at growing glow of fire on the first floor, then looks at Anne. Neither hurting or helping.

164 EXT. BIG HOUSE PORCH - AT THE SAME TIME 164

Lena watches a white man with an ax coming toward Clara. She raises her hand and turns it left. The man's body rises and slams against the house.

Clara and a few other slaves who saw stare at Lena stares in awe.

Lena awaits their reaction.

Clara smiles.

Alice watches another fire-torch fly into a window. She looks at Mary.

ALICE
The baby!

Mary nods and ventures into the burning home.

165 INT. BIG HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 165

Yelling can be heard from outside but there's a faint cry.

Mary ascends. Fire hasn't reached upstairs but it's smoky. Mary runs to the baby's room to find him crying and coughing. She grabs a blanket off the chair, covers him, runs out.

166

EXT. BELMONT PLANTATION - CONTINUOUS

166

Elizabeth watches this uprising unfold. A WHITE MALE DINNER GUEST (40s) steps next to her and shoots a male field slave in the chest.

Two other male slaves tackle him to the ground from behind and start pounding his body with large rocks.

The CRACK of his skull.

Elizabeth backs away. She looks up at Mary holding her baby and pulls a tiny knife from her skirt. She runs to Mary.

Mary sees the knife in Elizabeth's hand.

ELIZABETH
(trembling but firm)
You give my baby to me right now.

MARY
Missus it's okay.

Elizabeth watches Mary with the baby. Mary's loving hold. Elizabeth nods.

The fire grows inside the Big House.

Master Henry pulls a dagger out of the belly of a male field slave who falls to the ground. Another male field slave punches Henry in the face. Henry punches back, then runs the dagger across the slave's neck. Henry watches his body fall.

Henry looks up to see Clara standing in front of him holding a large rock in one hand.

Henry backs up to find Helen standing behind him.

Two more field women approach and next to them, holding large gardening tools.

They each glare deeply at him. Like he had stolen from each of them.

Sweet Retribution.

Helen looks into Henry's eyes, she holds only her apron in her hand.

Helen jump-ropes the apron around his neck and brings him to the ground. The women join in striking his body with their weapon of choice. A little blood splatters their faces.

Alice is trying to stay out of the way.

A white man in a three piece suit is choking Clara.

Alice and Mary see this, and look at each other panicked.

Alice scans the ground to find a empty glass bottle of liquor.

The man chokes Clara when a glass bottle smashed over his head. He falls to the ground. Clara inhales dramatically looking at Alice, who looks both pleased and mortified at what she's done.

Elizabeth watches Lena as Lena uses her powers to disarm a white man. Elizabeth finds an axe lying on the ground. She picks it up.

Elizabeth does her best to hurl the ax towards Lena. The axe stops midair just before it can hit Lena's back.

Elizabeth looks confused. The axe drops to the ground.

Lena turns around.

Mabel stands there with her arm extended. Koi at her side.

Lena grins.

Alice sees Mabel from afar. Alice smiles.

Elizabeth stares at Mabel for a moment. She recognizes her.

Lena runs to Mabel and hugs her.

LENA
I'm sorry.

Mabel puts her hand on Lena's cheek.

Koi looks takes in the mayhem around them.

KOI
You been busy!

Lena smiles at Koi.

Tom, Koi's Master, pulls a dagger from the belly of a male Slave. He looks up and sees Koi standing with Lena and Mabel.

Slow motion: Eyes wild, Tom pulls a handgun from his belt.

Tom pulls the trigger.

Slow motion: Mabel sees Tom coming. She steps forward and uses her power to thrust the gun out of his hand before he pulls the trigger again.

But Mabel's not quick enough.

The bullet penetrates Mabel's chest.

Alice turns to the sound of the gunshot.

Lena's eyes widen in horror as she falls down to the ground.

Koi kneels down to Mabel.

Lena turns to the direction of the bullet, wide-eyed.

She fiercely raises her hand as she storms toward Tom, lifting his body in the air.

Tom looks terrified as Lena looks into his face as he hovers above her.

With one motion to the left Lena throws his body into the air, it smashes what's left of a window into the burning house.

Lena looks weaker. She turns to Koi who holds Mabel's head in his lap. She looks down at the pool of blood growing underneath Mabel.

MABEL
(playfully to Koi)
I knew you'd be trouble

Koi smiles weakly. Lena kneels to Mabel's other side.

Tears fall down Lena's cheeks.

Mabel places a hand on Lena's face. First and last affection. She looks into Lena's face.

LENA
I'll...I'll get Ms. Alice-

Mabel struggles to get her words out.

MABEL
No no...You get these people out of here.

Lena looks into her grandmother's face.

MABEL (CONT'D)
Be better...than me...Don't hide-

Something catches Koi's attention. He points.

KOI
Lena!

Lena turns to see Elizabeth coming at her like a madwoman. She holds a knife in one hand, a burning torch in the other.

Lena stands.

Elizabeth swings the torch at Lena. Lena dodges it. Lena uses her powers to thrust the torch out of her hand into hers.

Lena brings her free hand to the fire and makes it grow toward Elizabeth. Forcing Elizabeth back.

This only makes Elizabeth more aggressive. She comes at Lena with the dagger. Lena tilts her head left.

Elizabeth's arm extends, trying to hold onto the dagger. The dagger eventually flies out of her hand.

Lena raises her hand. Both of Elizabeth's arms fly above her own head, crossing. Elizabeth's body rises into the air.

Lena looks into the desperation in Elizabeth's face. She knows this face. She's come to understand this face.

Alice watches. Koi watches. Other rebelling slaves watch.

Elizabeth looks into Lena's face.

Lena's brow is furrowed. She breathes heavily.

Lena can't do it.

Elizabeth looks prepared to be killed.

Lena pushes her own hand forward.

Elizabeth's body lurches several feet away, she lands hard on the ground.

Lena exhales. She's weak. She turns back toward Koi and Mabel.

Mabel lies in Koi's arms. Eyes open and unblinking.

Lena looks away.

Her eyes find what remain of the rebellion. She walks toward it. Some bodies lie dead on the ground. Some black, some white.

She sees Master Henry's dead body, blood having spilled from his mouth.

She sees Luke.

The eyes of the remaining slaves who fought, follow Lena's every step. Helen among them. Hattie among them.

Koi gives Mabel's lifeless hand a squeeze and lays her head gently to the ground. He stands and walks toward Lena.

Lena looks up at the fiery Big House.

Alice stands next to Mary who still holds the baby.

Koi reaches Lena.

KOI (CONT'D)
We have to go. We dead come
sunrise.

Lena looks at Koi, then looks around at the slaves that remain. They're as good as dead too.

She looks at Mabel's dead body some feet away. Lena looks away.

She looks around at her people who lived through this night. These adults, men and women, all eyes on this little girl.

LENA
We can't stay here.

Lena looks at Helen.

LENA (CONT'D)
What I know is that together, we
can fight.

HATTIE
Where would we go?

Lena pauses.

KOI
North. I know the way.

The Slaves whisper amongst themselves suspiciously.

KOI (CONT'D)
With Lena and with each other, we
got a chance. More of a chance than
if we stay.

No one moves.

KOI (CONT'D)
Whatever we gotta do we gotta do it
n-

Helen steps forward and grabs Lena's hand. Lena looks at her and smiles. Hattie stands by Helen. They start to walk forward. The remaining slaves slowly follow behind them.

Mary hands the baby to Alice. Alice knows what this means. Mary kisses Alice's cheek. Alice watches Mary catch up and join the group.

Elizabeth slowly stands.

Lena looks back at Elizabeth.

Elizabeth stares at Lena.

Lena stares at Elizabeth. Elizabeth only stands there. Chest rising and falling. Disheveled hair. Looking at Lena.

Lena turns away. Surrounded by fellow slaves.

Elizabeth is left standing alone. Her and her burning home.

Mary catches up with Helen. Mary looks at Koi.

MARY
(to Helen)
Who is that?

Helen shrugs.

Moonlight blues the determined faces of Lena, Koi, and Helen. The Big House burns behind them in the distance. With a drove of slaves from the Belmont plantation behind them, they fiercely gaze forward, ready to move into the night.

CUT TO BLACK.

END.