

NO MAN'S PROPERTY

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FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Northerners know nothing at all about Slavery. They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of degradation involved in that word, SLAVERY; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown. - A Woman of North Carolina."

INT. FLINT MANSION/LINDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Spartan room kept neat as a pin.

LINDA (19), African American, sits up in bed and studies a medical journal by candlelight.

SUPER: "Dr. Flint's house. Twelve miles from Savannah, Georgia. February, 1849."

FOOTSTEPS approach from down the hall outside the door and candlelight shines through the door cracks.

Linda blows out the candle and slides under the covers.

FOOTSTEPS stop outside her door.

Linda pulls the covers up tight around her neck.

Door latch moves.

Linda shuts her eyes and breathes heavy.

Door CREAKS open. Candlelight illuminates the room and it looks as if Linda is sound asleep.

MRS. FLINT (O.S.)  
(From down the hall)  
Are you coming to bed?

DR. FLINT (O.S.)  
(At the door)  
Yes, dear.

Door CREAKS shut.

FOOTSTEPS fade down the hall.

Linda exhales and opens her eyes; she looks terrified.

SUPER: "Inspired by a true story."

EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda is guided by the hand to the carriage house door by NATE (21), a strapping African American.

Linda appears anxious and hesitates.

Nate insists and Linda gives in. She follows him through the door.

Nate shuts the door once they are inside.

INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Nate picks out a dark corner out of view from a window. He leads a reluctant Linda into the corner.

Nate lights a candle and takes a seat on the floor. He pats the floor next to him as he looks into her eyes.

Linda hesitates, shakes her head, and steps back.

Nate gives her a look.

LINDA

Nate, what we've been doing is contrary to law. You're a free man and I'm a slave.

NATE

I ain't telling. Linda, now that I got a job fixing up your master's house, we can see more of each other. Like when we was children.

LINDA

We could be whipped and imprisoned if we're to be caught.

Nate looks hurt. He stands.

NATE

I ain't making you do nothing you don't want to.

Linda softens.

LINDA

I've no thoughts of refusing you.

Nate reaches into his pocket and produces a necklace made of leather cord with a handmade wooden cross. He cradles the wooden cross in his outstretched hand.

LINDA (cont'd)  
It's lovely.

NATE  
Made it myself. May I?

Linda smiles and nods.

Nate fastens the necklace around her neck.

NATE (cont'd)  
Are you sure you want to?

Linda nods.

Nate smiles and sits on the floor near the candle.

Linda feels around the floor and finds a loose floorboard. She retrieves a Bible stashed underneath. She hands the Bible to Nate and sits next to him.

Nate opens the Bible.

NATE (cont'd)  
When I can read this good book, I'll  
be nearer to God.

Linda smiles.

NATE (cont'd)  
You learn easy. It ain't easy for me.

LINDA  
You've made rapid progress. Let's  
read from the New Testament. Matthew  
is my favorite.

Nate opens the Bible to Matthew. He struggles to read.

NATE  
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for  
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

DINNER BELL chimes.

Nate looks dejected.

NATE (cont'd)  
You best be running.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

MRS. FLINT (40s), a fading beauty, rings the dinner bell with growing frustration. She's in a state of panic.

EXT. YARD - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda runs toward the house.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Linda scurries onto the porch.

Mrs. Flint looks worried sick.

LINDA  
The farmer's boy?

Mrs. Flint nods and cries.

Linda runs into the house.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

DR. FLINT (50s), stately man with a stern demeanor, applies a tourniquet just above JOHNNY'S (9), a white boy, knee.

Saws and knives are set out on a nearby table.

Linda comes knocking.

Dr. Flint smacks Linda across the head.

DR. FLINT  
When I call, I expect you to come  
immediately.

Dr. Flint selects a long knife from the table.

Johnny screams in protest.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
Hold him down.

Johnny screams louder.

LINDA  
What in heaven's name?

DR. FLINT  
Foot was mangled by a horse. You're  
going to assist me with a flap  
amputation.

Johnny cries out in protest.

Linda visually examines Johnny's foot. It's severely bruised  
and several toes are deformed. She looks Johnny in the eyes.

LINDA  
May I touch your foot?

Johnny gives her a look and shakes his head in protest.

LINDA (cont'd)  
I know what I'm doing.

Johnny ponders for a moment and then nods.

Linda manipulates Johnny's foot. He cries out in pain.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Displaced fracture and two dislocated  
toes.

Dr. Flint scowls at her.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Doctor, may I try to set the bones  
before you cut?

Dr. Flint hesitates, then reluctantly nods.

Linda removes the tourniquet.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Johnny, I need to cause you pain to  
help you. Do you understand?

Johnny nods.

Linda sets two dislocated toes and manipulates the broken  
foot until she can feel that the broken bone is in a better  
position to heal. All the while, Johnny cries out in pain.  
Linda maintains firm hand pressure to keep the broken bone  
in place. She looks at Dr. Flint.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Ankle splint, please.

Dr. Flint applies the ankle splint while Linda holds the  
foot. He secures the splint with a looped bandage.

Johnny nods off from pain and exhaustion now that he has a modicum of relief.

LINDA (cont'd)  
He'll be fine, given time to heal. Is that all, sir?

Dr. Flint scoffs.

Linda walks out.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Linda beats a dusty rug.

FARMER (40's), sturdy white man, holds open the door as he steps from the house. Johnny walks out with aid of crutches.

Linda and Johnny exchange warm smiles.

Johnny steps toward Linda and she meets him halfway. They hug.

Farmer looks disturbed and confused by his son's action.

Johnny makes his way down the steps with Farmer.

Johnny whispers in Farmer's ear.

Farmer tips his hat to Linda.

Linda politely nods.

Farmer lifts Johnny into a carriage and they drive off.

EXT. WATER PUMP - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda pumps water into a bucket. In the distance, Nate packs his carpentry toolbox at his wagon. They catch a glimpse of each other and smile before going about their business.

Dr. Flint, dressed in his finest suit, sneaks up on Linda from behind and gropes her underneath her skirt. Linda yelps and drops the bucket. Water spills over her feet.

Nate responds to Linda's yelp by grasping a hammer and keeping one eye on Dr. Flint.

DR. FLINT  
Powerful church service, this morning. One must prepare one's soul.

LINDA  
Is church where one goes to renounce  
the devil and all his works?

DR. FLINT  
You'd do well to join a church.

LINDA  
There are enough sinners there  
already.

Dr. Flint gives her a stern look of disapproval.

LINDA (cont'd)  
If I'd be allowed to live like a  
Christian, I'd be glad.

DR. FLINT  
What right have you to talk to me  
about what you'd like? I'm your  
master, and you shall obey me.

Dr. Flint catches a glimpse of Nate near his wagon.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
Get to work, boy. I ain't paying you  
to stand around and gawk.

Dr. Flint walks to the house.

Linda peers at her soaked shoes. She sits and unlaces them.  
The soles are worn so bad that her feet show through.

Nate reaches into his wagon and retrieves a brown paper  
parcel. He goes to Linda and presents the parcel to her.

Linda unwraps the parcel to find a new pair of shoes.

NATE  
Bought them for your birthday. Looks  
like you need them now.

Linda laces up her new shoes.

LINDA  
Nate, have you ever seen a miracle?

NATE  
I have.

LINDA  
Really? I've never seen one, myself.



NATE  
They're all round you. Like flies  
round a pecan pie.

Linda gives him a quizzical look.

NATE (cont'd)  
It's true. I've seen them. Them  
miracles fly fast. Never caught one,  
myself; but, if you try real hard and  
reach far and wide, I know you can.

Nate glances at Linda's new shoes.

NATE (cont'd)  
They look good on you.

Linda admires her shoes. She looks round and, seeing they're  
alone, gives Nate a hug.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/MRS. FLINT'S ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Flint naps in bed.

Linda attempts to silently cross the room with a pitcher of  
water, but her creaking new shoes awaken Mrs. Flint.

MRS. FLINT  
What is making that horrid noise?

LINDA  
Sorry, ma'am. It's my new shoes.

MRS. FLINT  
Take them off at once, before I throw  
them into the fire.

Linda removes her shoes.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
Stockings also.

Linda removes her stockings.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
You're cursed with a dark beauty.

Linda gives her a look.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
I warn you, don't tempt the master  
with your wickedness.

Linda looks away.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
Now, go fetch a chicken and prepare  
it for supper, you little imp.

EXT. CHICKEN PEN - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda chases a hen. The gravelly soil cuts at her bare feet.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Linda, feet cut and bloodied, prepares the hen for cooking.

Dr. Flint sneaks up behind Linda. He grabs her round the waist and pulls her close. He forces a kiss, smacks her on the buttocks and walks smugly out the room.

Linda buries a knife into the hen.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

KATE BUCKLEY (6), a white girl, moans with fever as she squirms in a small bed.

Dr. Flint pulls back the covers to expose her feet, one of which is swollen and shiny red with blisters.

Linda comes knocking with a serving tray of chicken soup and bread. She sets the serving tray upon a table.

Dr. Flint goes to Linda.

DR. FLINT  
Matthew Buckley's daughter, Kate.

LINDA  
Mr. Buckley, the slave hunter?

DR. FLINT  
Yes. She's gravely ill. I must draw  
out what's poisoning her to save the  
leg.

Linda checks Kate's forehead for fever and closely examines her foot. She can clearly see some open wounds - the work of a doctor's lancet.

Dr. Flint gathers some rye meal and tincture of iodine.

Linda gently touches Kate's sore foot and Kate cries out.

Dr. Flint leans down to Kate with the rye meal and iodine.

LINDA  
Doctor, I don't think --

Dr. Flint glares at Linda. She looks away.

Dr. Flint sprinkles the rye meal on Kate's swollen foot. He then applies the iodine to the open wounds.

Kate screams as the iodine does damage.

Linda holds Kate's hand.

Dr. Flint summons Linda into a far corner.

DR. FLINT  
I'll lance the blisters again in the morning. Until then, you must --

LINDA  
Erysipelas.

Dr. Flint gives her a look.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Perhaps, the lancet inflamed her condition, sir.

Dr. Flint gives her a stern look of disapproval.

Linda casts her eyes downward.

Dr. Flint leans in and whispers in her ear.

DR. FLINT  
She'll sleep tonight in my apartment.  
It'll be necessary that you sleep with her, so as to be on hand.

Dr. Flint walks out.

Linda gingerly washes Kate's swollen foot with soap and water. She elevates Kate's foot on some pillows and then soothes the foot with the application of cold rags. She spoon-feeds soup to Kate.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Linda examines Kate's foot; redness and swelling have lessened. Linda wraps the foot in linen as a homemade compression sock. Linda adjusts pillows to keep it elevated.

LINDA

You'll be up and running in no time.

Kate manages a smile.

Linda slides into an empty bed without removing her clothes.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - LATER

Kate is sound asleep. Linda, fully dressed in the other bed, stares at the ceiling.

Dr. Flint opens the door and peers in at Linda. He creeps in and stealthily shuts the door.

Linda, terrified, pulls the covers tight about her neck.

Dr. Flint slides into Linda's bed. He rolls on top of her and places his hand over her gaping mouth.

DR. FLINT

Be silent as your grave.

Linda is wide-eyed in terror.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/HALLWAY

Mrs. Flint walks by Doctor's Apartment door, candle in hand. CREAKING BED gives her pause. She grabs the door latch, thinks twice, and continues on her way down the hall.

EXT. CHICKEN PEN - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Dawn. Linda collects eggs. She looks downcast and defeated. She clasps the wooden cross necklace in her hand and prays.

LINDA

Dear Lord, please don't judge me as you would a free white woman who has both a safe home and laws to protect her. Although my body has been desecrated, my soul remains virtuous.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Linda prepares eggs for breakfast.

Mrs. Flint enters clutching a Bible. She looks peeved.

MRS. FLINT

Did you know you were to sleep in the  
doctor's apartment?

Linda looks down at the floor.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)

Did you entice him, you little whore?

Linda shakes her head.

Mrs. Flint holds the Bible in front of Linda.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)

Lay your hand on your heart, kiss  
this holy book, and swear before God  
that you tell me the truth.

Linda places a hand on her heart and kisses the Bible.

LINDA

This wasn't the first time.

Linda looks away as tears come to her eyes.

MRS. FLINT

I had my suspicions. You're such a  
pretty girl. And he --

Mrs. Flint chokes up.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)

He's desecrated our marriage vows. Do  
you know what that means; desecrated?

LINDA

I know all too well what it means to  
have your dignity insulted.

Mrs. Flint glares at her.

MRS. FLINT

You cannot possibly understand how it  
feels to be trapped in a sham  
marriage - ashamed, miserable and  
incapable of protecting my honor. You  
shall not speak of my humiliation.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/MRS. FLINT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Flint prepares for bed. Door is ajar that leads to an adjoining room. She peers in at Linda sleeping in the adjoining room.

Mrs. Flint opens the door wide. She slides into her own bed, props herself up on pillows and watches Linda sleep through the wide-open door.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/MRS. FLINT'S ADJOINING ROOM

Linda wakes to find Mrs. Flint hovering over her.

MRS. FLINT  
You were talking in your sleep. Who  
were you talking to?

Linda gives her a fearful look.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Linda mashes potatoes.

Dr. Flint walks in and caresses Linda's neck. She stiffens.

DR. FLINT  
Kate's hot with fever. Holding off on  
the lancet may cost that girl her  
life. You'll spend the night in my  
apartment - to bring her comfort.

He pats her buttocks and leaves the room.

She mashes the potatoes with authority.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kate shivers in bed.

Linda comes knocking with supper.

Linda checks Kate's forehead and see's that her clothes are soaked in sweat.

LINDA  
Your fever's broke.

Linda scrounges up clean clothes and helps Kate into them.

Linda serves Kate supper.

Kate eats while Linda changes the bed linens.

KATE  
You're nice.

Linda smiles.

KATE (cont'd)  
What's your name?

LINDA  
Linda.

KATE  
Thank you, Miss Linda, for helping  
me.

LINDA  
You're quite welcome, Miss Kate.

KATE  
I'm tired. Can I finish the rest  
later?

Linda nods.

Linda tucks Kate into bed.

KATE (cont'd)  
You're smart. I want to help people,  
just like you do.

LINDA  
That's a nice consideration.

KATE  
Do some of the sick people die?

LINDA  
Unfortunately, they do.

KATE  
Oh. Does it make you sad?

LINDA  
It does.

KATE  
How do you get happy again?

LINDA  
Well, I pray real hard and try to believe that there's good in this world.

Linda peers out the window.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Somewhere.

KATE  
What do you mean, somewhere?

LINDA  
No more questions. Time for counting sheep.

Kate points to the bookshelf. It is all medical titles.

KATE  
Read to me?

LINDA  
Of course.

Linda selects a random medical book. She reads the spine.

LINDA (cont'd)  
The man who never told a lie.

Linda reads the book to Kate, replacing the medical text with a memorized folktale.

LINDA (cont'd)  
(Reads)  
A long time ago in the amazing land of Africa there lived a man. The one thing which was famous about that man was that he had never lied in his whole life. People knew him as the man who never told a lie...

Linda reads as Kate drifts off to sleep.

Linda leaves to empty the chamber pot.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dr. Flint opens the door to his apartment. The chamber pot has been emptied and returned. Kate is asleep in the small bed. Linda is not there. Dr. Flint frowns.



Mrs. Flint approaches from down the hall.

MRS. FLINT  
Everything as it should be?

Dr. Flint feigns a smile and nods. He steps into the apartment and shuts the door behind him.

Mrs. Flint sighs and continues towards her room.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/MRS. FLINT'S ADJOINING ROOM - NIGHT

Linda is awake in bed. She has a wistful look about her.

Mrs. Flint appears in the doorway, as if summoned.

MRS. FLINT  
Trouble sleeping?

LINDA  
I was just having a dream.

MRS. FLINT  
Of who, exactly?

LINDA  
My mother, God rest her soul.

MRS. FLINT  
Oh. I suppose your kind are not  
entirely without redeemable souls.

Mrs. Flint returns to her own bed.

Linda pulls the covers over her head and weeps.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Linda totes a bucket of water as she steps onto the porch.

MATTHEW BUCKLEY (mid 30's), handsome gentleman, has his arm around his daughter, Kate, as they walk out of the house.

Dr. Flint follows Matthew and Kate as far as the door.

MATTHEW  
I'm in your debt, Doctor. You're a  
miracle worker.

DR. FLINT  
Kate's a strong girl. She did all the  
pulling through. I just helped her  
along, that's all.

Kate runs to Linda and gives her a huge hug.

Matthew looks thrown off kilter.

Dr. Flint glares at Linda.

Kate takes Matthew's hand and they walk toward the road.

Kate whispers in Matthew's ear.

Matthew gives her a quizzical look.

Matthew gazes at Linda and nods his head out of respect.

Linda politely waves.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DINING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. and Dr. Flint dine. Linda serves dessert.

Mrs. Flint glares at Linda. Linda catches her glare, yet goes about her work.

Mrs. Flint directs her glare at Dr. Flint.

Dr. Flint blissfully enjoys the first bite of his dessert.

MRS. FLINT  
I blush at the thought of the  
conversation I must have with you.

DR. FLINT  
I don't discuss serious concerns  
until I've had my brandy.

MRS. FLINT  
What I have to say cannot wait.

DR. FLINT  
I see. Linda, you're excused.

Linda curtsies and turns to leave.

MRS. FLINT  
Stay. This concerns all of us.

Linda stands still, her fearful eyes cast downward.

Dr. Flint takes a bite of dessert.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
It pains me to learn of your  
dalliance with Linda.

Dr. Flint looks deadpan at his wife. He chews his mouthful.

DR. FLINT  
She told you this?

MRS. FLINT  
She did. The poor girl is terrified  
to be in your presence.

DR. FLINT  
Well, if Linda did acknowledge it,  
I'm sure you tortured her into  
exposing me. It's simply not true.

Dr. Flint savors a bite of his dessert.

Mrs. Flint glares at Linda.

MRS. FLINT  
You may go.

Linda nods and walks quickly out of the room.

Dr. Flint enjoys the last morsel of his dessert.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
You deny her accusation?

Dr. Flint simply nods as he eats.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
Then, I'll see her flogged for her  
false oath.

Dr. Flint waves a cautionary finger.

DR. FLINT  
Linda's not to be whipped.

Mrs. Flint glares at him.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
The mark of the lash upon a pretty  
young woman would not be fitting of a  
doctor who cares for so many  
children.

Dr. Flint casually rises from his chair.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
I'll take my brandy on the porch.

Dr. Flint strolls out the room.

Mrs. Flint slams her fist on the table. This hurts her hand and she reacts to the pain. She massages her throbbing hand.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/KITCHEN

Dr. Flint stands in the doorway. He appears perplexed to find it empty. Screen door CLANKS in the breeze. Through the screen door, he sees Linda kneeling in prayer.

EXT. YARD - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda is deep in prayer. Dr. Flint eavesdrops.

LINDA  
Lord, if it were not for the children  
you place in my care, I'd ask you to  
confer upon my master the idea to  
sell me, for I'd rather be sold to  
any other than live the life I have.

DR. FLINT  
Did I not take you into my house and  
make you my companion?

Linda gasps. She is quick to her feet.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
Have I ever treated you like a negro?

Linda stares bug-eyed at him.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
I've never allowed you to be  
punished, not even to please your  
mistress. And this is the recompense  
I get - a prayer asking to be sold.  
You ungrateful girl.

Dr. Flint kisses her on the forehead.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
I will make a lady of you yet.

Dr. Flint winks and walks to the house. Linda is in a panic.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/LINDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Linda reads a medical journal by candlelight. She closes the book and gazes out the window at the stars.

LINDA

If I stay, he will continue to hurt me. If I leave, he will hurt so many others. Dear Lord, what am I to do?

INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda serves tea to Mrs. Flint, who rocks in her chair as she watches Dr. Flint tear open the back of a male SLAVE'S shirt. Slave's hands are bound and lashed to a post.

Linda turns to leave, but Mrs. Flint grabs her by the arm.

MRS. FLINT

Stay. Let this be a caution to you never to steal from my flour barrel.

Linda does her best to hide her horror as Dr. Flint whips the poor man. Blood trickles from every stroke of the lash.

INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda scrubs gore from the floorboards. The cowhide, still wet with blood, hangs from a rafter.

LINDA

God, I may be one of your most powerless creatures; however, I am resolved never to be conquered.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Nate repairs floorboards.

Linda comes out of the house with a pitcher of lemonade and two glasses. She lovingly watches him work.

Nate catches her shadow and rises to greet her.

NATE

Linda, you grow prettier with each passing day. Who knows? Give it a year and you may be pretty enough to look at.

LINDA  
Why, Nate, aren't you the charmer.

Nate gazes longingly at the lemonade.

LINDA (cont'd)  
For the horses. But I figure they can spare a glass.

Nate takes a glass and guzzles it down. He holds out the empty glass.

LINDA (cont'd)  
You sure do drink like a horse.

Linda fills his glass. They sit and enjoy their lemonade.

EXT. YARD - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda and Nate on a stroll.

NATE  
I earned me 300 dollars and I've the promise of more work in Savannah.

LINDA  
I recall as a child you telling me your dream of one day holding a hundred dollars. You should be proud. Your good work is rewarded.

NATE  
Don't you get it? We can wed now. You're coming with me to Savannah.

LINDA  
Have you taken leave of your senses? The law gives no sanction to the marriage of a free man to a slave.

NATE  
That's where the 300 dollars comes in, silly goose. I'm gonna buy you.

Linda gives him a look.

NATE (cont'd)  
I mean; buy your freedom. If the doctor accepts, of course.

LINDA  
Even if he did, and I doubt he would,  
I couldn't leave them.

Nate looks confused.

LINDA (cont'd)  
There are so many sick and injured  
children here that need me.

NATE  
There are many more in Savannah that  
would be blessed to be in your care.  
You needn't suffer needlessly to do  
God's work.

Linda considers his words.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/MRS. FLINT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Flint wrestles with her covers in bed. She occasionally glances through the open door into the adjoining room, where Linda feigns a sound sleep.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/MRS. FLINT'S ADJOINING ROOM

Linda, one eye open, peers through the open door at Mrs. Flint. Linda closes her eyes and murmurs in her sleep.

LINDA  
Oh, Doctor. What if the mistress  
catches us?

Linda opens one eye to observe Mrs. Flint rise from bed and stealthily approach. As Mrs. Flint draws near, Linda shuts her eyes. Linda moans in pleasure and feigns sleep. Mrs. Flint, seething, violently shakes Linda awake.

MRS. FLINT  
I'll have you peeled and pickled, you  
little whore.

Linda pretends to be groggy and confused.

LINDA  
Have I been talking in my sleep?

Mrs. Flint gives her a look.

LINDA (cont'd)  
What was I saying?

MRS. FLINT  
Far too much, I'm afraid. You and the  
doctor were --

LINDA  
Were what?

MRS. FLINT  
Don't play innocent with me. You'll  
never be a lady.

LINDA  
Nate thinks I am.

MRS. FLINT  
Nate? That colored carpenter boy?

LINDA  
He asked me to marry him.

MRS. FLINT  
You know the law. I'm locking you in.

Mrs. Flint is at the door and about to pull it shut.

LINDA  
He said he'd buy my freedom.

Mrs. Flint hesitates, her interest piqued.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Nate says he's got 300 dollars. Would  
you consider that a reasonable price  
for someone as bothersome as me?

Mrs. Flint processes her words.

LINDA (cont'd)  
He wants to take me away to Savannah.  
He has the promise of work there.

MRS. FLINT  
You don't say.

LINDA  
Perhaps, you could put in a good word  
with the master. I'm sure he would  
not object if you pleaded my cause  
earnestly.

Mrs. Flint looks pensive as she shuts and locks the door.

Linda appears pleased with herself.



INT. FLINT HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Mrs. Flint lights Dr. Flint's pipe as he puffs.

MRS. FLINT

Why don't you sell Linda to that colored boy? We need the money, and could easily find you another assistant.

DR. FLINT

She stays.

MRS. FLINT

You're jealous because she loves the carpenter.

Dr. Flint strikes her a violent blow on her cheek.

DR. FLINT

That boy is dumber than a bloodhound. Would you trust Linda with a man such as he?

Mrs. Flint's eyes cast downward.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)

I'd think not. Besides, Linda knows my every need. She'll remain in my apartment to tend to the patients. I trust you take no umbrage with that?

Mrs. Flint shakes her head.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)

It's settled then. She stays.

Mrs. Flint's eyes well with tears.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Linda sweeps.

Mrs. Flint appears at the door. A fresh bruise puffs her cheek.

MRS. FLINT

The master summons.

Linda peers into Mrs. Flint's eyes and can see that she's been crying.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Linda hesitates in the passageway.

Dr. Flint's hate filled eyes are fixated upon her. After a moment of silence, he speaks.

DR. FLINT  
So, you want to be married, do you?  
And, to a free colored boy.

Linda stares deadpan at him.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
If you must have a husband, you may  
take up with one of my slaves.

LINDA  
Don't you suppose, sir, that a slave  
can have some preference about  
marrying? Do you suppose that all men  
are alike to her?

DR. FLINT  
Do you love this boy?

Linda nods.

Dr. Flint strikes her so hard that her nose bleeds.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
How dare you tell me so.

Linda is unable to control her temper.

LINDA  
You have struck me for answering you  
honestly. How I despise you.

They stare at each other in stunned silence.

DR. FLINT  
I've a right to do as I like with  
you.

LINDA  
You have no such right.

DR. FLINT  
Silence! By heavens, girl, you forget  
yourself too far. How'd you like to  
be sent to jail for your insolence?

LINDA  
There would be more peace for me  
there than there is here.

Dr. Flint raises a hand to strike her.

Linda firmly stands her ground.

LINDA (cont'd)  
What will the townsfolk say at  
learning their doctor must resort to  
corporal punishment to control both  
his wife and slave?

Dr. Flint grunts in frustration. He lowers his hand.

DR. FLINT  
I took you into my house. I trust you  
to assist me. I've tried to make you  
happy. Are you incapable of  
appreciating my kindness?

LINDA  
I'll deem you the most kind master if  
you set me free to marry Nate.

DR. FLINT  
Goddammit!

Dr. Flint paces in anger.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
I'll be lenient. I'll give you one  
more chance to redeem your character.  
Never mention that boy's name again,  
and all will be forgiven. If I ever  
know of your speaking to him, I'll  
cowhide you. And if I catch him  
lurking about my premise, I'll shoot  
him as soon as I would a dog. Do you  
hear what I say?

LINDA  
I intend to wed Nate as a free woman.

Dr. Flint raises a hand in anger.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Remember. The townsfolk.

DR. FLINT  
You're insufferable!

Dr. Flint storms out of the room.

Linda appears emotionally exhausted. She grasps her wooden cross necklace and prays.

LINDA  
Lord, deliver me from this hell.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Linda stokes the fire in the stove. Mrs. Flint approaches from behind.

Startled, Linda jumps and drops the match.

Mrs. Flint glances at the burning match on the floor.

Linda smothers the match with her bare foot. She grimaces.

MRS. FLINT  
You have a visitor. That colored boy  
you fancy. You may have a moment.

Linda runs out the screen door.

EXT. YARD - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda runs to Nate. They embrace.

NATE  
I've promising news of work in  
Savannah. Leaving tonight. When I  
return, I'll have enough to make a  
more generous offer to the doctor.

LINDA  
No offer will be generous enough.

NATE  
Then, I'll marry you as a slave.

LINDA  
What about our children? They must  
follow the condition of the mother.

NATE  
I'll talk to the doctor and learn his  
price. I'll not be refused.

LINDA

Forget the doctor. I'll run away with you to Savannah. There, we can stow away on a ship or pay a smuggler. We can make a new life for ourselves in the free states.

NATE

Get that idea out of your mind. Many a dead slave's made such plans.

Nate glances up at a second-floor window. Linda follows his gaze to find Dr. Flint peering down at them. Dr. Flint disappears from view.

Nate and Linda are eye to eye. Nate looks terrified.

Mrs. Flint comes to the screen door.

MRS. FLINT

Linda, the master wants to see you.

Linda wraps her arms around Nate and whispers in his ear.

LINDA

I'm going with you. The South road where it enters the woods. Midnight.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Linda enters.

Dr. Flint motions for her to approach. She does.

He strikes her with a stunning blow.

She crumbles to the floor in a heap.

He removes his leather belt.

DR. FLINT

I'll teach you a lesson about marriage and freedom.

EXT. YARD - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Linda's screams are heard from the Doctor's Apartment.

Nate trembles with rage.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Nate cries as he drives his wagon.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/LINDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Linda's back is bruised and welted. She moves gingerly and moans as she nurses her wounds.

Dr. Flint comes knocking with a bottle of whiskey. He pours a glass and holds it out for Linda to take.

DR. FLINT  
It will help you sleep.

Linda looks away.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
I intend to build you a small house  
on the property. Back in the woods -  
quiet, secluded, private.

Dr. Flint sets the glass of whiskey on a table.

LINDA  
I'll never set foot in it.

Dr. Flint forces a kiss.

Linda pulls away and slaps him hard.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Satan has no more devoted follower.

Dr. Flint scowls and walks out the door.

Linda clasps her wooden cross necklace.

LINDA (cont'd)  
With you on my side, this monster  
will not prove too strong for me.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Linda goes about her nightly chore of preparing the kitchen for the next day.

Mrs. Flint walks in.

MRS. FLINT  
Why is the house not locked up?

LINDA  
I'm not done with my chores.

MRS. FLINT  
See to it, immediately.

Mrs. Flint is about to leave when she turns to her.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
No child is in the doctor's care.  
You're to sleep in your room. I best  
find you there in the morning.

Mrs. Flint walks out.

Linda breathes deeply.

INT. FLINT HOUSE

Linda goes room to room on the ground floor. She shuts all the windows and locks all the doors except for the exterior kitchen door. She then climbs the stairs.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/LINDA'S ROOM

Linda, in her undergarments, opens a trunk and selects her traveling clothes, which she sets out on the bed.

KNOCKING at the door.

Linda conceals her traveling clothes with blankets.

Dr. Flint opens the door and ogles her.

Linda reaches for her robe.

Dr. Flint grabs her hand. She tugs to free herself. He won't let go.

DR. FLINT  
Though you've been criminal towards  
me, I feel for you. I can pardon you  
if you obey my wishes, tonight.

LINDA  
Unhand me, or I'll raise the house.

Dr. Flint lets go of her hand.

DR. FLINT  
 You're a blind girl. You turn aside  
 all my good intentions towards you.

Linda gives him a look.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
 You must henceforth have no  
 communication of any kind with that  
 carpenter. Do you hear me?

LINDA  
 I speak with my carpenter every day  
 and every night.

DR. FLINT  
 You don't love him.

LINDA  
 I do. And, he loves me.

DR. FLINT  
 You ignorant girl. He'll desert you.

LINDA  
 You're wrong.

DR. FLINT  
 You're my slave, and shall always be  
 my slave. I'll never sell you; that  
 you may depend upon.

Dr. Flint stomps out and pulls the door shut after him.

Linda sighs deeply. She kisses the wooden cross necklace.

LINDA  
 Old Satan is one busy old man;  
 He rolls them blocks all in my way;  
 But Jesus is my bosom friend;  
 He rolls them blocks away.

Linda gets dressed in her traveling clothes.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE - NIGHT

Moonless night. House is dark and silent. Rain gently falls.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/MRS. FLINT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Flint sound asleep.



INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT

Dr. Flint passed out drunk.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/HALL

Linda peers down the hall and listens intently. All is still and silent. She tiptoes downstairs.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DINING ROOM

With trembling steps, Linda feels her way in the darkness to the kitchen door.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/KITCHEN

Linda is wide-eyed and bushy-tailed. She peers out the window at the moonless night.

Screen door CREAKS and CLAPS.

Linda is startled at first, and then relieved to see the screen door is just swinging in the night air.

Linda steps out onto the porch through the screen door.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - NIGHT

Pitch-black night. Rain comes down hard. Linda can see nothing. She secures the main door and the screen door.

EXT. YARD - FLINT PROPERTY - NIGHT

Linda makes her way through rain and darkness to the road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Linda runs down the rain-soaked road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/WOODS - NIGHT

Linda runs through darkness and rain to where the road first enters the woods.

A lantern and the sound of men's chatter in the distance alerts Linda.

Linda dashes through the brush into the woods and hunkers down not far from the road.

Patrol of several white men wielding muskets stops on the road not far from Linda's hiding place. The men rest on the fence posts and imbibe in whiskey.

Linda stays still. She is fixated on the patrol and fails to notice a snake slithering up to her.

Snake bites Linda's leg.

Linda instinctively gasps and strikes the snake.

Snake loosens its hold and slithers away.

Linda's hiding place is illuminated in the glow of the patrol's lantern.

Linda dashes through the woods. Branches tear at her and rip her clothes.

Patrol pursues her.

Linda climbs a tree. She watches from above as the patrol searches before they give up and stumble away.

Linda climbs down out of the tree and tries to put weight on her stricken leg. She grimaces in pain. She sits on a log and examines the wound. It is swollen and red. She looks defeated.

Linda makes her way to the edge of the road. She peers out from the brush. There is no sign of the patrol. She steps out onto the road.

Linda makes her way down the road. She favors her good leg and appears to be in great pain.

CLIP CLOP of a horse and CREAKING wagon wheel coming from out of sight down the road.

Linda stumbles for cover in the woods just off the road.

Wagon sounds grow louder until it sounds as if the wagon is passing by.

Linda peers from her hiding place. She sees Nate driving his wagon at a snail pace. Nate seems to be searching for her.

Linda makes a move to stand and breaks a branch.

CRACK of the branch alerts Nate. He pulls on the reins and brings the wagon to a halt.

NATE  
Who's there?

Linda painfully gets to her feet.

LINDA  
It's me, Linda.

Nate looks her direction. He strains to see her. He shushes her with a finger to his mouth and signals her to step out from the woods.

Linda takes a step and collapses, grabbing her wounded leg. She moans in pain.

Nate leaps down from the wagon and runs to her. He looks startled to see her in so much pain. He examines the wound. It's swollen and ruby red.

NATE  
Cottonmouth?

Linda nods.

NATE (cont'd)  
Need to get you to the doctor. I'll say it's all my doing and take the beating for the both of us.

LINDA  
No. Take me to your place.

Nate assists Linda to his wagon. He lifts her into the bed.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Rain has lessened to a drizzle.

Nate drives down the road quietly and cautiously.

Linda writhes in pain as the rough ride jars her. She moves to find a comfortable position for her leg and, in the process, unwittingly spills a few iron nails onto the road.

EXT. NATE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Modest yet neat shack in a small African American enclave. All is quiet and dark. Nate lifts Linda from the wagon and helps her inside.

INT. NATE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Nate assists Linda to the bed.

LINDA  
Not yet. Table.

Nate helps Linda to the table. She sits.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Vinegar, some coins and warm ashes.

Nate starts a fire in the stove.

Linda moans in pain.

Nate gathers up a bottle of vinegar and a few cooper coins.

Nate separates some ashes from the fire to let them cool.

Linda wipes her brow as fever worsens.

Nate gives her vinegar, coins and ashes.

Linda prepares a poultice of vinegar and ash. She applies it to her wound. She then pours vinegar into a soup bowl and drops in a few copper coins. She sets the bowl aside to let the copper coins steep.

Linda looks at the bed. She turns to Nate and nods.

Nate assists Linda to the bed. She rests her head on the pillow.

Nate makes a bed of blankets on the floor. He props his head up on his coat and stares at the ceiling.

NATE  
What was you thinking trying to  
escape? Your lucky they didn't have  
dogs.

Linda snores.

INT. NATE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Linda wracked with fever. She stirs from sleep.

Nate sound asleep.

Linda stumbles to the table. She fishes coins from the bowl. She applies the cankered vinegar to her inflamed wound.

Nate stirs.

NATE

I'm taking you to the doctor in the morning. Ask for forgiveness. Tell him you came to see me. Let him make an example of me.

LINDA

I'll die before I go back to him.

Nate shakes his head and sighs.

Linda tries to walk but the pain is too intense. She sits.

Nate helps Linda to bed.

LINDA (cont'd)

Two hours. Need time for the vinegar to do its work.

Nate holds her hand until she's sound asleep.

He peers out the window. Rain has stopped.

He gets dressed, walks out and shuts the door.

EXT. NATE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Overcast and dark as pitch. Nate prepares horse and wagon.

INT. NATE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Linda stirs. She's delirious with high fever and chills. She looks disoriented and scared at finding herself alone. Her vision is hazy.

Door opens.

Linda gasps and tries to get to her feet, but fever and pain stop her.

Through her hazy vision, she makes out the shape of a man approaching her. It's Nate, although she imagines him to be Dr. Flint.

Nate bends over Linda and goes to lift her.

Linda, seeing Dr. Flint instead of Nate, goes to scream.

Nate places his hand over her gaping mouth.

Linda panics as a dark memory stirs.

DR. FLINT (V.O.)  
(in Linda's mind)  
Be silent as your grave.

NATE  
Be still. You're gravely ill.

Linda looks bug-eyed at Nate. She breathes heavy and finally makes out Nate's caring face. She nods.

Nate carries her to the door.

EXT. NATE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Nate gently lifts Linda into the bed of the wagon.

Nate goes to blindfold her with a bandana.

Linda protests with her hands and turns her head away.

NATE  
Gotta be this way. Only way widow  
Corbin's gonna allow it.

Linda gives him a quizzical look.

NATE (cont'd)  
Trust me. She's good folk.

Linda relents.

Nate blindfolds and conceals her under a bed of blankets.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Nate drives the wagon while staying vigilant for patrols.

EXT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE - NIGHT

A stately plantation house.

Nate knocks at the back door.

Linda shivers with fever in the wagon. She watches as Nate converses with MARTHA CORBIN (40's), white woman dressed in a coat over nightclothes. Martha listens intently to Nate, then goes inside.

Nate waits impatiently. He is wracked with worry.

Martha steps out of the house accompanied by SAM (16), lanky white boy who appears groggy and perturbed, and BEN (18), strapping white young man who looks tired and perplexed.

Nate leads Martha, Ben and Sam to the wagon.

Martha leans over Linda and smiles.

MARTHA

My name's Martha. These are my sons, Sam and Ben. Nate told me your story. I've known Nate for a long time. His mother was my nanny and his father built this place when they were my father's - before my father granted them their freedom. Perhaps, I can do something to help you.

Linda glances at Nate and he assures her with a nod.

Martha places her hand gently upon Linda's forehead.

MARTHA (cont'd)

You're flush with fever.

Martha address Sam and Ben.

MARTHA (cont'd)

See her to the attic room above my apartment.

Ben lifts Linda with ease and carries her into the house as Sam opens the door for him.

Nate and Martha are eye to eye; Nate panicked, Martha stern.

MARTHA (cont'd)

She's lucky. The patrols have become more frequent. This was reckless.

NATE

She fears the doctor something fierce.

MARTHA

He'll come for you. You must leave your home.

NATE

I've got work in Savannah.

MARTHA

Good. You were there tonight; do you understand me?

Nate nods.

MARTHA (cont'd)

I'll conceal her for a time. My name shall never be mentioned. Do I have your word?

NATE

Yes, ma'am.

MARTHA

Now go, before she's missed.

Nate nods.

Nate drives his wagon off down the road.

Martha sighs and turns toward the house.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - NIGHT

Ben gently sets Linda upon a pile of feather bed mattresses that are in storage.

Sam gathers up blankets.

Linda is delirious with a raging fever. She shivers. Bleary eyed, she catches a glimpse of a menacing face, Dr. Flint, as he places a blanket over her. It is actually Sam.

Linda screams and grabs Sam by the throat with all the strength she can muster.

Sam is choking.

Ben frees Sam from Linda's grasp.



Linda hyperventilates.

Sam and Ben cover her with blankets and they leave the room.

Linda is restless with fever.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/STAIRS

Sam and Ben walk down the stairs. They meet Martha at the foot of the stairs. The boys have a look of deep concern.

MARTHA

Those devils won't search this house unless we give them cause. Keep her quiet and out of sight. Go make some hot oatmeal. She needs nourishment to fight the poison.

The boys nod and walk off toward the kitchen.

Martha climbs the stairs.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC

Martha looks in on Linda. She's sleeping.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Daybreak. Nate, bleary-eyed, drives his wagon. In the distance, the city of Savannah is waking up.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Mrs. Flint sits on a sofa. She looks somber. Dr. Flint anxiously paces.

DR. FLINT

Are you earnest when you say you don't know anything about her running off?

Mrs. Flint nods.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)

If that carpenter boy had anything to do with this business, I'll see him lynched.

KNOCKING at the door.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)

About time.

Dr. Flint goes to answer the door.

Mrs. Flint grins in secret satisfaction.

Dr. Flint returns with Matthew.

Mrs. Flint puts on a solemn face.

Matthew bows to her and removes his hat.

MATTHEW

Mrs. Flint.

MRS. FLINT

Detective Buckley.

Mrs. Flint indicates a chair. Matthew sits.

Dr. Flint sits next to his wife on the sofa and holds her hand. Mrs. Flint looks deadpan.

MATTHEW

So, tell me, who's on the run?

DR. FLINT

Last night, Linda ran off without the least provocation.

MATTHEW

Linda, your assistant?

DR. FLINT

We had treated her very kindly. My wife liked her, isn't that so, Nora?

MRS. FLINT

Oh, yes. Very much, indeed.

MATTHEW

Don't you worry, ma'am. She'll soon be returned to you.

DR. FLINT

We will welcome her with open arms.

MATTHEW

Can you show me to her room?

INT. FLINT HOUSE/LINDA'S ROOM

Matthew searches the room from top to bottom. All seems to be in good order and nothing is missing. He breaks open Linda's trunk to find it full of clothes. He's perplexed.

EXT. YARD - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Matthew peruses the grounds. Dr. Flint watches. Matthew finds nothing of interest. They are about to turn back to the house when Matthew notices Linda's bare footprints leading away from the house and toward the road.

Matthew drops to his knees and examines the footprints.

MATTHEW

Did you say she was barefoot?

DR. FLINT

Linda refused to wear the shoes we gave her.

Matthew smiles up at Dr. Flint.

MATTHEW

Good thing it rained last night.

EXT. DRIVE - FLINT PROPERTY - DAY

Matthew and Dr. Flint follow footprints leading out to the main road. Small barefoot prints track down the road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Matthew rides his horse, following Linda's tracks.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/WOOD - DAY

Matthew loses Linda's track where she ran into the woods.

Matthew dismounts and examines the road closely. It is a maze of wagon and horse tracks, but he fails to find any evidence of Linda's footprints emerging from the woods.

He finds an empty whiskey bottle and scoffs.

He searches the woods and finds a piece of material torn from Linda's clothes in the thorny brush.

He mounts his horse and rides down the road.

He comes across the iron nails that fell from Nate's wagon.  
He pockets a few nails.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Matthew sips coffee. Mrs. and Dr. Flint sit separate from each other.

MATTHEW

Tell me again about this carpenter.

DR. FLINT

A free negro, dumb as a rock, and no gentleman. On more than one occasion, I had to intervene to protect Linda's honor.

MATTHEW

Is that why you discharged him - because you feared for her safety?

DR. FLINT

Indeed. Linda is very dear to us.

Mrs. Flint's eyes are cast downward.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)

I'm quite certain he abducted her.

MATTHEW

His name?

DR. FLINT

Nate.

MATTHEW

Do you know where Nate lives?

DR. FLINT

No. But I know who may. His folks were once the property of the Corbin's. I suggest you pay Widow Corbin a visit.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Matthew rides his horse down the road.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - DAY

Martha comes knocking with a breakfast tray.

Linda is jarred from sleep, frightened and confused.

MARTHA

Linda, do you remember me from last night?

Linda shakes her head.

MARTHA (cont'd)

I'm Martha. This is my home. I live here with my sons, Sam and Ben. They helped you upstairs last night and will look after you.

Linda is speechless.

MARTHA (cont'd)

Nate brought you to us. May I check you for fever?

Linda nods.

Martha places a hand gently upon Linda's forehead.

MARTHA (cont'd)

Good. Your fever broke during the night.

Martha indicates a stack of clean clothes. Linda gazes upon the stack of beautiful clothes. Next to the clothes is a Bible, some candles and matches.

MARTHA (cont'd)

Last night, I fetched you fresh clothes and a Bible. Nate told me that you enjoy reading the New Testament.

LINDA

Am I in Savannah?

MARTHA

It's best for all involved not to say too much about where you are. Just know that you'll be safe here.

Linda nods.

MARTHA (cont'd)

I keep this room to store away things that are out of use. None of my visitors will suspect anything unless they hear some noise. Enjoy breakfast and eat it all, for it'll not do for me to come to you again till night. I'll bring you a hot supper.

Martha starts down the stairs. She stops before her head is out of view and turns to Linda.

MARTHA (cont'd)

Keep up your courage. The patrols are especially rough ever since the uprising. I hope this state of things will not last long.

LINDA

May God forever bless you.

Martha walks down the stairs.

Door at the foot of the stairs SHUTS and latch LOCKS.

Linda wipes dirt from a small window and a ray of sunshine illuminates the otherwise dark attic. She peers out at the beautiful yard and gardens.

LINDA (cont'd)

How does Nate know these nice people?

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - DAY

Linda, dressed in fresh clean clothes, reads the Bible by the open window. A slight breeze blows her hair. She wipes the perspiration from her brow.

CLIP CLOP of a horse comes to a stop followed by FOOTSTEPS on the street below.

Linda casually glances out the window and takes a double take. It's Matthew and he's coming towards the front door. She gapes and pulls back from the window.

Front door OPENS.

Muffled conversation between Matthew and Martha.

Front door SHUTS.

FOOTSTEPS as Matthew and Martha walk on the first floor and then up the stairs to the second. They are directly beneath her attic hiding place.

Linda looks round in terror. She scurries behind some old furniture covered with large sheets. She crawls under a sheet and trembles.

Approaching FOOTSTEPS as someone climbs the stairs.

Linda braces herself against the furniture and shuts her eyes.

FOOTSTEPS as someone walks round the room.

FOOTSTEPS come near and stop immediately in front of Linda.

The sheet is lifted from Linda.

Linda holds out her hands to be bound. She bawls.

Linda opens her eyes and there stands Martha.

Linda is overcome with relief and sinks down upon the floor.

Martha smiles, kneels down, and comes eye to eye with Linda.

MARTHA

Ben is taking the detective on a wild  
goose chase through the back  
property. Come. We haven't much time.

EXT. YARD - CORBIN PLANTATION - DAY

Linda follows Martha toward the summer kitchen.

INT. CORBIN SUMMER KITCHEN - DAY

Linda is wide-eyed with fear.

Martha locks the door.

Martha lifts up a plank in the floor.

Linda peers beneath the lifted plank. A bed of carpet and a quilt are spread out.

MARTHA  
(in a whisper)  
This is where we hide runaways.

Linda nods and steps under the floor.

MARTHA (cont'd)  
Detective's following Nate's trail.  
I'll see to it that he leaves  
disappointed.

Martha drops in the floorboard. All goes dark.

Linda has just enough room to bring her hands to her face to brush the falling dust from her eyes as Martha walks over her and leaves the kitchen. Linda can hear her HEARTBEAT.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Matthew paces. Ben stands watch.

Martha walks in with tea service. She nods to Ben and he leaves the room.

Martha serves Matthew tea.

INT. CORBIN SUMMER KITCHEN - DAY

Linda is wide-eyed in the pitch-black of her hiding place.

Door CREAKS open. FOOTSTEPS draw near. Plank is removed.

Linda squints up at Martha's smiling face.

MARTHA  
You may come out, now.

Martha lends Linda a hand as she steps from the hole.

MARTHA (cont'd)  
The detective's going to report back  
that Nate has been in Savannah since  
being discharged by the Doctor and  
that you're on your way up North via  
the road to Augusta.  
(MORE)



MARTHA (cont'd)

The doctor will merely lighten his pocketbook sending the detective hunting in the wrong direction. In the meantime, you must stay with us and keep out of sight.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - NIGHT

SUPER: "A few weeks later."

Night. Linda sits near the open window, on the floor where she could not be seen, and sketches a picture of Nate in the moonlight. She looks round and there are several such Nate sketches pinned to the walls.

LOW STRAIN OF MUSIC from outside.

Linda stealthily peers down to see a band of serenaders playing "Home, sweet home."

She listens till the sounds do not seem like music, but like Nate singing to her.

She clasps her wooden cross necklace, closes her eyes and smiles. She opens her eyes. A streak of moonlight crosses the floor before her, and in the midst of it appears the form of Nate. She reaches out to caress his face and he vanishes. She cries.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - DAY

Daybreak. Linda is awake in bed.

Martha comes up the stairs.

Linda clings to her.

LINDA

I beg of you, tell me if my Nate is dead, for I'd seen his spirit in my room last night. I fear something has happened to him.

MARTHA

I'm sure Nate is well. He knows he mustn't come for you. I'll see to it that you get to him, but not until the coast is clear.

Linda nods as a tear rolls down her cheek.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Nate and crew of African American men work on some repairs.

SUPER: "City of Savannah, Georgia."

EXT. CITY STREET - SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew walks, carrying a stack of printed notices. He pauses in front of a tavern and nails one of the notices to a porch post. A white MAN comes out of the tavern. Matthew approaches the man.

MATTHEW

Have you seen a colored carpenter  
around town?

Man nods and points up the road.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Matthew questions the crew of carpenters. Nate is nowhere to be found. Carpenters are nervous, yet provide nothing in the way of help.

Matthew, exasperated, walks down the street.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Nate rides up in his wagon, loaded with lumber. He steps down and approach the store. He catches the disapproving snarls and glares of white men leaving the store.

Nate walks round to the rear of the store and enters.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DINING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. and Dr. Flint eat breakfast. It appears as if they're well into an argument.

MRS. FLINT

You dug deep into our purse to send  
the detective after her, only for him  
to return empty handed. Let her go.

DR. FLINT

I'll find her. Linda shall be my slave as long as I live, and when I am dead, she shall be the slave of our children.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Matthew walks up to a porch pillar and nails up a posting.

Posting reads: "\$300 REWARD! Ran away from the subscriber, an intelligent colored girl, named Linda, 19 years of age. Five feet four inches high. Dark eyes, and black hair inclined to curl, but it can be made straight. Has a decayed spot on a front tooth. She can read and write, and in all probability will try to get to the Free States. All persons are forbidden, under penalty of law, to harbor or employ said slave. \$300 will be given to whoever delivers her to me, or lodged in jail. Dr. Flint."

Matthew is about to leave when Nate's wagon, with a load of lumber, gives him pause. He approaches the wagon and spies wooden toolbox in the wagon. Toolbox has the name "Nate" carved into it.

Nate comes round from the back of the store. He stops dead in his tracks at the sight of Matthew by his wagon.

MATTHEW

Is your name, Nate?

Nate runs. Matthew pursues and catches Nate. After a struggle, Matthew has Nate's hands bound with rope.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

I'm taking you in on the charge of having aided the escape of a slave.

NATE

I swear. I've not seen Linda since I worked at her master's place.

Matthew grins.

MATTHEW

You're going to help me find her.

EXT. CITY STREET - SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew parades Nate toward the city jail.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Through the bars, we see Matthew interrogate Nate.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Matthew hands Dr. Flint an overstuffed envelope.

MATTHEW

Nate agreed to your demand for his freedom that he'd have nothing to do with Linda once she's returned to your care.

DR. FLINT

You're sure he has no knowledge of her whereabouts?

MATTHEW

He's too simple to slide a lie past me. I'm convinced he's ignorant to her plan.

Doctor looks defeated.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

Don't worry. I haven't lost one yet.

Doctor nods.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

I've a hunch she's but a stone's throw away from here. I'll double the patrols. They'll search every home and place of business. You'll have her back soon enough, I promise.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - NIGHT

Linda awakens to see that it's Ben who has stirred her. Lantern lights from the yard below dance in the window, accompanied by the murmur of many men. Ben hushes Linda and guides her to the stairs.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/STAIRS

Ben and Linda run down the stairs as KNOCKING intensifies at the front door. Lower level is aglow with the many lanterns outside the windows. The murmur of the men has an aggressive tone.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/FOYER

Ben and Linda are at the foot of the stairs.

Martha deliberately takes her time to answer the front door. She turns to Ben.

MARTHA

You'll never make it to the summer kitchen. Take her to the cellar. I'll do my best.

Ben and Linda scurry toward the cellar stairs.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/STAIRS

Ben and Linda scurry down the stairs to the cellar.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/FOYER

Martha opens the door and is faced with a determined patrol.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/CELLAR

Ben guides Linda to a stack of supplies. He clears the pile enough to reveal a hole that is just large enough for a svelte person to drop down through. The pit is shallow with a mud floor and some puddles of water.

Ben lowers a small ladder into the hole.

Linda descends the ladder into the pit. She is forced into a constrained posture to fit into the tight space.

Ben pulls up the ladder and conceals the hole.

All goes pitch-black for Linda.

Linda hears Ben scurry away and up the stairs.

The cellar door SLAMS shut.

Linda can hear only the dripping of water, her breathing and heartbeat in the utter silence.

After what seems like an eternity, Linda can hear that the patrol has arrived in the cellar. She hears their steps and the muffled sound of their voices.

BANGS and CRASHES suggest the basement is being turned upside down in their search for her. The sounds intensify as the search approaches her hiding place.

Linda remains perfectly still and quiet. Just when she believes her hiding place has been discovered, the patrol quits their search and clears out of the cellar.

A few anxious minutes pass.

Ben comes and releases Linda from the pit.

The basement is a disaster.

LINDA  
This is all because of me.

Martha yells down from the top of the stairs.

MARTHA  
Ben! Come quickly!

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/DINING ROOM

Ben and Martha run into the room closely followed by Linda.

Sam cries out in agony. He is pinned under a monstrous China cabinet. The China, smashed into smithereens, is strewn everywhere.

Ben, Martha and Linda all pitch in to lift the cabinet.

Martha blurts to Ben in frustration.

MARTHA  
Your fool brother tried to stop those devils.

Ben, Martha and Linda manage to lift the cabinet and free Sam.

Linda examines Sam's right lower leg. It is bruised and broken a few inches below the knee.

MARTHA (cont'd)  
Ben, go fetch Dr. Towsen.

Ben runs from the room.

Front door OPENS and SLAMS shut.

Linda closely examines Sam's wounded leg.

Martha places a gentle hand upon Linda's shoulder.

MARTHA (cont'd)  
You mustn't be seen. Go to the attic  
before the doctor arrives.

Linda rises and whispers in Martha's ear.

LINDA  
He's got a green-stick fracture. I'm  
not leaving his side.

Martha gives Linda a concerned look.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Good that it didn't perforate the  
skin. A contaminated fracture is when  
I worry. I can do this.

MARTHA  
But the doctor --

LINDA  
Is a drunk.

Martha gives her a look.

LINDA (cont'd)  
I know him all too well. He'll be  
sleeping it off at this late hour. I  
can do this.

MARTHA  
No. We must wait for the doctor.

LINDA  
I placed my trust in you. Now, you  
must trust me.

Martha reluctantly nods.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Now, let me work before his leg  
spasms. Do you have splints?

MARTHA  
Yes, from when his father broke his  
leg years ago.

LINDA  
Good. Please fetch them along with  
clean water and lengths of linen.

Martha nods and runs off.

Linda kneels down next to Sam.

LINDA (cont'd)  
I've done this many times. You're in  
good hands.

Sam nods, however, he looks concerned.

Linda manipulates the broken leg, searching for the location of fracture. Sam grimaces and cries out in pain. Linda locates the break in the bone. She keeps a hand at the location until Martha returns with water, lengths of linen and splints.

Linda uses water and strip of linen to clean the lower leg.

Linda looks up at Martha and can see that the color is draining from her cheeks.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Martha.

Martha looks at Linda.

LINDA (cont'd)  
I need you to be my assistant so I  
can properly set the bone.

Sam groans.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Hold down his thigh and don't let go.  
Can you do this for me?

Martha nods. She kneels down and grabs hold of Sam's thigh.

Linda looks into Sam's wide eyes.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Forgive me, Sam.

Sam shakes his head and screams in protest.

Linda makes eye contact with Martha.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Got a firm grip?

Martha nods.



LINDA (cont'd)  
On the count of three. One...two...  
three.

Linda gives the broken lower leg a tug while Martha keeps a firm hold on the thigh. Sam screams in agony. Linda uses firm hand pressure to align the broken bone.

LINDA (cont'd)  
I have it. Give me the splint.

Martha gives her the splint. Linda applies the splint and secures it with lengths of linen. Sam passes out from pain and exhaustion. Linda checks his pulse and breathing.

Ben appears standing in the doorway with an obviously tipsy DR. TOWSEN (60s).

Dr. Towsen glares at Linda.

LINDA (cont'd)  
He's resting, Doctor. The bone's  
stable.

Dr. Towsen scoffs at Linda. He gives the splinted leg a cursory examination. He gets to his feet and glares at Linda. He grabs his bag and stumbles out of the house.

Ben goes to comfort Sam.

Martha gives Linda a hug.

MARTHA  
Bless you.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Matthew confers with the patrol.

Dr. Towsen stumbles through the mob and whispers in Matthew's ear.

Matthew paces away from Doctor and patrol.

MATTHEW  
(to himself)  
Mrs. Corbin, why did you lie to me?

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - NIGHT

Martha comes knocking and hands Linda a man's suit of clothes - a jacket, trousers and hat.

MARTHA

The road to Savannah will be heavily patrolled. I suggest going by the way of the swamp.

Martha holds out a large knife for Linda to take.

Linda gives her a look.

MARTHA (cont'd)

Take it.

LINDA

I've never used a knife in anger.

MARTHA

Keep that little detail to yourself.

Linda sighs and accepts the knife.

MARTHA (cont'd)

The Doctor has undoubtedly let the cat out of the bag by now. I'll hold off the detective as long as I can.

Linda hugs Martha.

LINDA

I haven't the words.

MARTHA

Godspeed.

Martha walks off.

Linda packs a few things in a small bag.

Linda goes to a filthy window and makes a shape of a cross with her finger. She prays.

LINDA

Lord, shield this house. See to it that Sam's leg mends straight and strong. Thank you for granting me the capacity to help my benefactors.

EXT. YARD - CORBIN PLANTATION - NIGHT

Linda, disguised as a man, sneaks towards the back gate. She pauses for a moment to gaze back at Martha's bedroom window. Martha is silhouetted in candlelight for a moment and then the window goes dark.

Linda makes her way through the pitch-black moonless night to the gate and runs off into the dark woods.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC - NIGHT

Ben rids the attic of anything that may provide evidence that a slave girl had taken refuge here.

Torchlight flickers outside the small windows.

Ben peers down to see a patrol surround the house.

Matthew shouts out orders and directs the patrol.

EXT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE - NIGHT

Matthew commands the patrol to all four corners of the property. He turns to a leader of the patrol.

MATTHEW

No one enters or leaves. I'm going in alone. This is personal.

Matthew strides up to the front door and pounds his fist to make a loud KNOCKING sound.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/FOYER - NIGHT

Incessant KNOCKING at the front door. Martha is slow to answer. Ben stands ready for a fight a few steps behind Martha.

Martha opens the door.

MARTHA

Detective, haven't we endured enough for one night?

Matthew peers round Martha into the disaster of a house.

MARTHA (cont'd)

As you can clearly see, your men left no stone unturned.

MATTHEW

Step aside, ma'am, or I'll see your home burnt to cinders.

MARTHA

Why all the anger? You may come in.

Matthew steps inside. Martha shuts the door.

MATTHEW

You lied. Where are you hiding her?

Ben makes a threatening move. Matthew readies to strike the first blow. Martha steps between them.

MARTHA

You're right. I lied. And I'd do it again. It was my Christian duty.

MATTHEW

Your Christian duty is to return a man's property.

MARTHA

She's no longer here, so you may go.

MATTHEW

Do you understand I can arrest you?

MARTHA

Will you?

MATTHEW

No, because you're going to tell me where she's hiding.

MARTHA

Ben, show the Detective around the house, so he can see for himself that she has gone.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/DINING ROOM

Ben shows Matthew to the disaster of a dining room. Martha stands just outside the door.

BEN

Your men are thorough, I grant them that.

Matthew scoffs at him.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/BEDROOM

Matthew opens the door to find Sam moaning in bed with his leg in a splint. Ben stands behind Matthew in the hall.

BEN  
Your men did that, too.

Matthew gives Ben a look of concern.

BEN (cont'd)  
The Doctor was too drunk to help.

MATTHEW  
Linda set the leg?

Ben nods.

BEN  
She's the best doctor I've ever seen.

Matthew is deep in thought. Martha walks up.

MARTHA  
Doctor Flint is the devil. Linda told me what he did to her. Let her find peace.

MATTHEW  
You believe a slave's accusations against her master?

MARTHA  
I do.

MATTHEW  
Take me to the cellar.

MARTHA  
Ben, show the Detective where we hide our peaches.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/CELLAR

Matthew searches while Ben and Martha look on. Matthew ponders.

MATTHEW  
This house has an attic, does it not?

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/ATTIC

Ben and Martha watch Matthew search the attic. He locates an item of her clothes. Martha glances at Ben. He shrugs.

Matthew gazes at the window with the cross traced on it. He looks Martha dead in the eyes.

MATTHEW

She's going to her carpenter, isn't she?

Martha tries to maintain a poker face; however, her eyes betray her.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

She'll die in that swamp, if the patrol doesn't lynch her first.

Matthew storms out of the room.

EXT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE - NIGHT

Matthew runs to the leader of the patrol.

MATTHEW

She's not here. Search the cemetery.

Leader rounds up the patrol and they march in the opposite direction of Linda's escape path.

Matthew lingers until the patrol is out of sight.

EXT. YARD - CORBIN PLANTATION - NIGHT

Matthew follows Linda's path through the backyard gate and into the wood.

EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Linda arrives at the edge of a nasty swamp, where an old rowboat is docked.

Linda steps into the rowboat. She uses an oar to push off from shore. She rows miles into the swamp until the reeds are too thick for passage. She gets out of the boat and is waist deep in the swamp. With her large knife, she starts to cut a path through the reeds and briars while pulling the boat along by rope. She is soon covered with hundreds of mosquitoes.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Dawn breaks. Linda cuts and forms a large seat among the reeds.

As the light increases, she sees snakes slithering round her. She shudders and makes her way onto the reed seat. Her face is a pitiful sight with all the mosquito bites.

She scans as far as she can see. Reeds are so thick and high that it is impossible to see beyond a short distance.

She glances from snake to snake.

Morning passes into afternoon.

Linda is perched on the makeshift reed seat. The number of snakes increases. She thrashes the snakes with sticks to keep them from crawling over her.

SOUND of OARS in the water.

Linda peers through the reeds. It's Matthew rowing a boat out in the clear water.

Linda gets low and stays still.

Matthew rows nearer.

Snakes crawl over Linda. She grimaces in silence.

Matthew rows away from Linda's hiding place.

Linda watches Matthew row out of sight. She cries in prayer.

LINDA

Dear Lord, what sort of world is this  
where venomous snakes are less  
dreadful than a white man that the  
community reveres?

Linda cuts a path through the reeds and briers, pulling the boat along behind her. She cuts her way clear to an opening in the swamp. She pulls the boat into the opening. She gets into the boat.

Linda starts to row, but she's too fatigued to make progress. She takes a moment to catch her breath. She nods off to sleep.

Afternoon passes to dusk. Mosquitoes swarm the boat and wake Linda. She rows several miles to shore and conceals the boat among the reeds.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Linda makes her way along a footpath trodden in the woods. She stumbles due to exhaustion. She props herself up and gets her second wind. She continues the trek.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Linda stumbles towards a small hunting shack in the woods. She walks round the shack and can see it is uninhabited.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Linda opens the door and mice scatter. She steps inside and secures the door. She searches the place for food and finds nothing but a few crumbs. She spots a trapdoor in the ceiling, centered above a table.

She steps up onto the table and peers into what is a very small garret - the highest part is three feet high and slopes down abruptly. There is no admission for light or air. It's empty. She grunts.

EXT. CREEK NEAR HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Linda stumbles to the creek. She is starved and exhausted. She drinks from the creek. She musters enough strength to make her way back to the shack.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Linda fights to stay awake. She prays.

LINDA

Lord, can you send food like you did  
for the Israelites? My weak body  
betrays me.

Linda nods off.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Morning sun shines through the window. Linda is sound asleep.

SNAP and CRACKLE of twigs followed by a man HUMMING.



Linda is startled awake. She peers out the window to find a HUNTER (30s), scruffy white man, approaching. He carries a musket and backpack.

She climbs up into the garret and pulls the trapdoor closed.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda is cramped and struggles to find a comfortable position. The darkness and heat are oppressive and she suffers for lack of airflow. She prays.

LINDA

Why is it that I'm compelled to run  
from prison to prison while the  
Doctor sins freely out in the open?

Shack door OPENS and SHUTS.

FOOTSTEPS as Hunter goes about his business below.

Linda stays still.

INT. HUNTING SHACK

Hunter unloads his pack of all sorts of food and supplies.

He starts a fire and cooks up eggs and bacon.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda wistfully sniffs the scent of bacon cooking below.

INT. HUNTING SHACK

Hunter eats his breakfast.

Hunter cleans his musket.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Hunter steps out with his musket and follows a footpath into the wood.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Linda climbs down from the garret. She wipes sweat from her brow. She peers out the window. Hunter is nowhere in sight.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Linda steps out and shuts the door.

EXT. CREEK NEAR HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Linda takes a long drink and splashes water on her face. She sits on the grass and takes in the fresh air.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Linda glances about the clearing and does not see Hunter. She stealthily peers into the window. Hunter is not inside.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Linda enters and closes the door.

She sneaks a plate of hard crackers, jam and fruit.

She cleans up as to not tip off the Hunter of her presence.

She gathers a handful of food that would not be easily missed.

She goes to leave. Through the window, she happens to catch a glimpse of Hunter approaching. He carries a dead rabbit.

She panics.

She stashes the handful of food up in the small garret.

She climbs up into the garret and pulls the trapdoor shut.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda swelters in the heat and there's no airflow.

Door OPENS and SHUTS below. FOOTSTEPS as Hunter walks about.

INT. HUNTING SHACK

Hunter cleans the rabbit.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda perspires in the suffocating heat. She hears her heart pounding in her chest.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Sun moves in the sky from morning to late afternoon.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Hunter cooks up some stew.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Sweat pours down Linda's face and into her mouth. She shuts her eyes and prays in silence.

LINDA (V.O.)  
Nate's kisses are sweet like candy.  
Fear, however, is salty as brine.  
Please Lord, make him leave.

INT. HUNTING SHACK

Hunter sits at the table and eats his stew.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda does not stir. She breaths deeply to manage her fear. Little red bugs crawl over her and pierce her skin, leaving small red bumps and welts. She brushes them away by the dozens, however, there are hundreds of the little red insects and she grimaces through the torment of it.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Evening turns into night.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Hunter settles in for a night of whiskey and smokes.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda cannot see her own hand in front of her face in the complete darkness. Panic sets in and she hyperventilates.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Moon tracks across the sky.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Hunter SNORES passed out among empty whiskey bottles.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda crawls around in the darkness and hits her head against something. She gropes around and finds that it is a gimlet left stuck in the wood beam of the ceiling. Linda uses the gimlet to bore three rows of holes, one above another. Then she bores out the interstices between. She succeeds in making one hole about an inch broad. She drills holes in the design of a cross next to her makeshift window. She prays.

LINDA

Help me make it through this night.

She sits by her new window and enjoys the little whiff of air that floats in along with the moonlight.

She falls asleep.

INT. HUNTING SHACK

Hunter sleeps soundly.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET

Linda is in a deep sleep. She dreams that Dr. Flint is glaring at her, a rifle in one hand and a length of rope in another.

Linda's eyes pop wide open and she jumps up, banging her head against a beam.

She screams in pain. Suddenly realizing her situation, she clasps a hand over her gaping mouth.

Hunter does not stir below.

She sighs relief.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/PARLOR - NIGHT

Sam itches his splinted leg. He can see it's healing nicely.

Martha peers out the window. A patrol holds vigil.

Ben walks into the room.

MARTHA  
Backyard as well?

Ben nods with a frown.

MARTHA (cont'd)  
The devils won't leave us alone. No matter. Soon we'll be in our new home. This place is too much to keep up since your father passed. We can continue our good work in Savannah.

Ben and Sam nod.

INT. HUNTING SHACK/GARRET - NIGHT

Linda is in pain, having to relieve her bladder.

She squirms and breaths deeply.

INT. HUNTING SHACK

Trapdoor opens. Linda peers down at Hunter sprawled out on the bed. She stealthily steps onto the table and collapses as her one leg is asleep. She holds her breath.

The sudden noise stirs Hunter. He grunts and blindly looks round without seeing a thing. He snorts and snores.

Linda exhales and steps down from the table.

She tiptoes out the door.

EXT. CREAK NEAR HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Linda scurries to the creek. She relives herself on the bank and then drinks from the creek. She splashes water on her face and washes her arms and legs. She walks back to the shack.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Linda stealthily enters the shack. The empty bed catches her eye. She gapes.

FOOTSTEPS behind her.

Linda turns and is face to face with Hunter, who is propped up in the doorway and holds his rifle.

HUNTER

You's a girl in boy's clothes.

Hunter ogles her and wets his lips.

Linda glances at the door and measures her chance of escape.

Hunter levels the rifle at her.

HUNTER (cont'd)

Never had me a darkie.

Rifle barrel darts back and forth as Hunter is too drunk to steady it on Linda.

Linda darts for the door.

Hunter whacks her with the rifle and sends her sprawling onto the floor.

Linda shimmies into the corner. She reaches on her belt for her knife. The knife is not there.

Hunter aims his rifle at her.

HUNTER (cont'd)

Show me whatcha got, nigger girl.

Linda glances round and sees her knife on the floor where she was dropped. It is behind Hunter and well out of reach.

Hunter presses the rifle to her head and cocks the hammer.

HUNTER (cont'd)  
You deaf nigger? I said, show me  
whatcha got.

Linda looks him dead in the eyes as she slowly disrobes revealing her shoulders and enough of her chest to draw his eyes downward. She springs at Hunter and he instinctively pulls the trigger.

Hunter is surprised that the rifle fails to fire.

Linda screams in pain. The palm of Linda's hand is pinched between the pan and the hammer.

Linda grabs the rifle barrel with her free hand and cracks it against Hunter's head, sending him to the floor.

Linda, holding the rifle, frees her bloodied hand as she hovers over the unconscious Hunter.

Linda checks Hunter and can see that he's breathing.

She picks up her knife and returns it to her belt.

She bandages her wounded hand.

She shoves the rifle up into the garret.

Hunter stirs and moans.

She binds his hands and feet. She applies cold compresses to the swollen bump on his forehead. She bandages his head.

She packs up a small bundle of food and runs out of the shack, shutting the door tight behind her.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Linda runs following the footpath.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Matthew steps from the woods into the clearing around the shack. He circles the shack and something catches his eye - the little cross that Linda made with the gimlet. He grins.

INT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Hunter is wide-eyed as he struggles against his restraints.

Door bursts open and in walks Matthew.

Matthew and Hunter come eye to eye.

HUNTER

It was a gang, ten of 'em at least.

Matthew glances at the bandage artfully applied to Hunter's head. He grins and cuts Hunter free.

Hunter glances round the room, panic in his voice.

HUNTER (cont'd)

Where'd that bitch stash my gun?

Matthew grins knowingly.

MATTHEW

A gang, was it? Ten of them, did you say?

Hunter stares at the floor.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

She's a firecracker, ain't she?

Matthew laughs as he walks out the door.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE - DAY

Dr. Flint rides up in his carriage. He appears exasperated.

Mrs. Flint walks up and peers into the carriage. Doctor is alone. She grins.

Dr. Flint steps from the carriage.

MRS. FLINT

I can see your trip to Atlanta was not as productive as you had hoped.

Dr. Flint gives her a look.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)

Poor pitiful thing, all alone in that big city. Or, perhaps she's hiding out somewhere else. Aiken, perhaps?



Dr. Flint stamps his foot in a rage.

DR. FLINT  
Get out of my way, woman.

Mrs. Flint steps aside, biting her lip.

Dr. Flint storms past her into the house.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
I'll find Linda. You can rest assured  
of that. And when I find the rascals  
that are hiding her, I'll cut off  
their heads.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Working farm on the outskirts of the City of Savannah.

Linda is on the verge of exhaustion as she stumbles upon the barn.

She walks round back and finds a large wagon stacked high with hay. She climbs onto the wagon and conceals herself the best she can within the hay.

She dozes off.

EXT. BARN - LATER

Matthew comes upon the barn. He pauses for a drink of water from the well.

Matthew leans up against the wagon full of hay for a moment to catch his breath.

Linda does not stir.

Matthew picks a path to follow and is on his way.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Early morning.

FARMER prepares the hay wagon with a team of horses.

Linda sleeps soundly.

EXT. ROAD TO SAVANNAH - DAY

Farmer drives the hay wagon at a gentle pace.

CLIP CLOP of the horses wakes Linda. She looks perplexed as to what's happening. She peers out through the hay at the passing scenery. She stays quiet and still.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - SAVANNAH - DAY

Farmer pulls up in front of the store and steps down from the wagon.

Linda stays still, concealed under a blanket of hay.

Matthew rests on a bench in front of the store, his hat pulled down over his eyes. The sound of Farmer walking up to the store catches Matthew's attention and he lifts his hat to take a look.

Farmer tips his hat.

Matthew smiles and nods.

Farmer enters the store.

Matthew gazes at the wagon with a quizzical look. He walks up to the wagon and it comes to him in a flash - this is the wagon he leaned up against during the night.

Linda catches a glimpse of Matthew. She looks scared. She closes her eyes.

Matthew does not see Linda. He reaches into the hay and his hand comes close to touching her.

Farmer steps out of the store and looks as if he just caught a thief.

Matthew catches Farmer's gaze and quickly withdraws his hand. He takes a step back from the wagon. He points off down the road.

MATTHEW

Sir, do you happen to live on the farm near the woods back that way?

Farmer nods and spits tobacco juice.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

A negro girl matching the description of Doctor Flint's runaway assaulted a hunter in those woods. Have you seen her?

Linda is bug-eyed.

Farmer shakes his head. He doesn't appear remotely interested in the conversation as he walks to his wagon.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

Help me catch her and there's a reward in it for you.

Farmer gives him a look and steps up onto the wagon. He snaps the reins and drives away.

Matthew yells after him.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

A man ought to have what belongs to him.

Linda breathes deeply as she rides away in the wagon.

Matthew stands in the dusty street, watching the wagon ride off. He sighs.

CLERK (adult), white male, watches the scene from the store doorway. He shakes his head.

CLERK

You're barking up the wrong tree, mister.

Matthew turns to Clerk.

CLERK (cont'd)

That negro nurse, Linda, saved his son, Johnny, from Doctor Flint's butchery. He ain't gonna lift a finger to catch her. Neither will I.

Matthew ponders these words.

EXT. ALLY - SAVANNAH - DAY

Farmer pulls up in an ally of carriage houses. Seeing that no one is in sight, he steps down from the wagon. He circles to the back of the wagon and rustles the hay.

Linda gasps.

Farmer moves hay to uncover Linda's face. She looks scared.

FARMER  
Remember me?

Linda gets a good look at Farmer. A look of recognition crosses her face. She calms down.

LINDA  
Johnny's father?

Farmer nods.

LINDA (cont'd)  
How did his ankle mend?

FARMER  
Strong as an oak. Tell me how can I help?

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Modest house in the heart of Savannah. It is in the final stage of construction. No one has yet moved in.

Several African American carpenters are hard at work on the finishing touches. Nate directs their work.

Farmer drives up in the hay wagon.

FARMER  
Which one of you is Nate?

The men look round concerned.

Nate steps forward.

NATE  
I am, sir.

Linda is all grins beneath the hay.

FARMER  
Follow me.

Farmer drives the wagon down a private drive that circles round the back of the house.

Nate hesitates before he follows. The men follow a few steps behind Nate.

EXT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - DAY

Farmer pulls up in front of a newly completed carriage house.

Nate and men round the house.

Farmer steps down from the wagon. He pushes hay around and helps Linda step from the wagon.

Nate gapes.

Linda runs to Nate.

Nate takes her in his arms.

FARMER  
I'm no negro lover. This is for my son.

Farmer steps up into the wagon.

FARMER (cont'd)  
There's a detective who knows she's in town. Be careful.

Farmer drives off.

Men gaze at Nate holding Linda.

Linda catches their gazes and is suddenly self-conscious.

NATE  
They're my friends. We need to hide you.

Linda nods. She gazes at the carriage house and sighs.

LINDA  
Am I to sleep with the horses?

Nate shakes his head.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Thank God.

Nate grins.

NATE  
They haven't moved in, yet.

Linda gives him a look.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Sun sets low on the horizon. Work crew departs the job site.

INT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - DAY

Linda makes herself up a bed of straw.

Nate comes knocking and watches her fluff up the straw bed.

NATE

Tad early to hit the hay.

Linda rolls her eyes at him.

Nate hands her a newspaper, stationery and a fountain pen.

Linda gives him a quizzical look.

NATE (cont'd)

God blessed you with reading and writing. Considered you could use these to pass the long days hiding.

LINDA

Newspapers only serve the cause of systematically abusing our people. And, who am I going to write to?

Nate hangs his head.

Linda softens. She takes the newspaper, stationary and pen.

LINDA (cont'd)

Thank you. It was thoughtful.

NATE

I'm squirreling away all I earn. I'll get enough to pay our way on a ship bound for New York.

Linda forces a smile.

Nate kisses her.

NATE (cont'd)

Brighter days will come.

Nate walks off.

Linda looks round the lonely carriage house. Her eyes well with tears of frustration.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dr. Flint paces as he reads a letter. Mrs. Flint appears in the doorway.

MRS. FLINT  
More claims of Linda's capture? Let  
me guess, you're going to Canada.

Dr. Flint glares at her.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
They'll dry up once word gets round  
that we can no longer pay the reward.

Dr. Flint strikes her upside the head.

DR. FLINT  
I'm sick of your mouth, woman. She'll  
come back, when she's tired of  
running.

INT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - NIGHT

Linda kneels in prayer on a bed of straw in the pitch-black of the shuttered carriage house.

LINDA  
I'm giving into dark thoughts. Is  
there no justice or mercy in your  
divine government? Why do you permit  
the curse of slavery to exist? Why do  
you persecute me for being born as I  
am? My faith in your love is not so  
clear to my soul today as I hope it  
will be hereafter.

Linda rolls onto her side and shuts her eyes.

LINDA (cont'd)  
If only you would give me a sign.

Linda drifts off to sleep.

INT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - DAY

Dawn. Mysterious breeze blows straw.

Linda opens her eyes to see that the newspaper is blowing all round the room. The front-page blows against her face.

She pulls it away and reads the name of the newspaper: "The New York Herald."

Linda sits next to a small crack in the wall where there's just enough sunlight to read by. She reads an article and a residential address in the print catches her attention. She furls her brow in contemplation. She reads on until a second residential address gives her pause. She grins.

Linda puts pen to stationary and composes a letter; "Dear Dr. Flint."

The New York Herald is open to a page with a residential street address.

INT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - LATER

Chorus of hammering as the men work on the house.

Linda is bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

Nate comes knocking with breakfast.

LINDA

I know how we're going to rid ourselves of the detective.

INT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - LATER

Empty breakfast dishes. Nate deep in thought. Linda waits for him to say something.

NATE

Harebrained idea, but why not. Give me the letter.

Linda hands him a letter addressed to Dr. Flint.

NATE (cont'd)

You want my smuggler friend to put it in the mail when he gets to New York?

Linda smiles and nods.

EXT. WHARF - SAVANNAH - NIGHT

Nate speaks with CAPTAIN PETE (40s), a white seafaring man.

Captain Pete nods.



Nate stealthily hands Captain Pete the letter from Linda.

Captain Pete conceals the letter in his pocket.

The two men part ways.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Matthew returns to the barn on the outskirts of Savannah and finds the now empty hay wagon in which Linda hid.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Matthew knocks at the door.

Farmer cracks open the door.

MATTHEW

Sir, I've reason to believe that Linda, the slave girl, hid in your wagon, without your knowledge, of course.

Farmer is deadpan.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

I fear for Linda's safety.

Farmer raises an eyebrow.

MATTHEW (cont'd)

I must find Linda before a slave hunter gets his hands on her. If you would be so kind as to tell me the places you've stopped on your way to deliver hay...

Farmer slams the door in Matthew's face.

INT. CORBIN PLANTATION HOUSE/DINING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Corbin enjoys breakfast with Ben and Sam.

MRS. CORBIN

Our new home is ready. Today, we start packing.

Ben and Sam smile.

EXT. HOUSE - SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew knocks at a front door.

SUPER: "Three weeks later."

WOMAN (adult) answers the door.

Matthew shows her a sketch of Linda.

Woman shakes her head.

Matthew walks away dejected.

INT. FLINT HOUSE/DOCTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dr. Flint sorts through his mail. Letter from Linda catches his attention. He examines the handwriting.

DR. FLINT  
It's in her hand.

Dr. Flint examines the post mark. It was mailed from New York. He opens the letter.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Mrs. Flint naps in a rocking chair. Dr. Flint comes running out of the house and the screen door slams behind him.

Mrs. Flint is startled awake.

DR. FLINT  
I know where she is.

Mrs. Flint gives him a look.

Dr. Flint opens the letter and reads it to her.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
Dear Doctor Flint. I have long wanted to write to you; but the disgraceful manner in which I left you made me ashamed to do it. If you knew how much I have suffered since I ran away, you would pity and forgive me. I have purchased freedom at a dear rate. If any arrangement could be made for me to return to you, I would gladly come.

(MORE)

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
 Let me know in time, and I will meet  
 you here in New York at the address  
 provided below. Write as soon as  
 possible to your unhappy servant,  
 Linda.

Dr. Flint beams.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
 The foolish girl has repented of her  
 rashness and wants to return.

MRS. FLINT  
 You're not going after her.

Dr. Flint nods.

MRS. FLINT (cont'd)  
 With what money?

DR. FLINT  
 We own this place outright. I'm good  
 for a loan.

MRS. FLINT  
 Oh, no. I forbid you from borrowing  
 against my home.

Dr. Flint gives her a stern look.

DR. FLINT  
 You forget your place, woman.

MRS. FLINT  
 You're not to step one foot out this  
 house to run after her.

DR. FLINT  
 Try to stop me, and you'll regret it.

INT. BANK - DAY

BANK MANAGER (adult) sits across a desk from Dr. Flint.

DR. FLINT  
 Five hundred is all I require for  
 expenses going and returning.

BANK MANAGER  
 I'll offer generous terms, for I too  
 fear for Linda's safety. She saved my  
 Susan.

Bank Manager counts out \$500 and stuffs the bills into an envelope. He hands the envelope to Dr. Flint.

BANK MANAGER (cont'd)  
Have you considered rewarding Linda with her freedom for all she's done for our community? I won't charge you to draw up the manumission papers.

Dr. Flint scoffs.

EXT. ROAD TO SAVANNAH - DAY

Dr. Flint rides in a carriage.

EXT. WHARF - SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew inquires with Captain Pete, showing him the sketch of Linda.

Captain Pete shakes his heads and walks away.

Matthew sits on a bench and sighs.

MATTHEW  
Lord, help me find Linda. If some reward seekers discover her, they'll sure as shooting get up a row. I'd not like to see her dragged through the streets like a common negro.

CLIP CLOP of an approaching carriage.

Matthew turns to see Dr. Flint step from the carriage.

Dr. Flint comes eye to eye with Matthew.

Dr. Flint shakes his head in disapproval and walks with purpose to Matthew.

Matthew rises and politely bows.

Dr. Flint thrusts Linda's letter into Matthew's hand.

DR. FLINT  
Read it.

Matthew reads the letter. He's shocked by what he reads.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
 That's right. She's in New York. Some  
 detective you are, letting a negro  
 girl escape your grasp. You're  
 relieved of your commitment to me.

Matthew hangs his head.

DR. FLINT (cont'd)  
 I expect a refund in full for  
 services not rendered. Go home.

Dr. Flint walks towards the passenger ship ticket office.

EXT. HOTEL - SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew steps into a carriage.

EXT. WHARF - SAVANNAH - DAY

Dr. Flint boards a passenger ship.

EXT. ROAD FROM SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew rides in a carriage. City of Savannah grows smaller  
 in the distance behind him.

EXT. ROAD TO SAVANNAH - DAY

Mrs. Corbin, Ben and Sam ride in a carriage. A wagon with  
 their possessions follows close behind. Savannah grows  
 larger in the distance as they ride nearer.

INT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - NIGHT

Linda paces until the pain in her stiff legs compels her to  
 sit. She massages her legs.

FOOTSTEPS approach the carriage house.

Linda makes herself as small as possible behind barrels.

Nate opens the door.

NATE  
 Linda, it's me, Nate.

Linda emerges from her hiding place. They embrace.

NATE (cont'd)  
Didn't mean to scare you.

LINDA  
The dark loneliness of this prison cell brings bad thoughts and tests my resolve.

Nate gives her a worried look.

LINDA (cont'd)  
This is hard. But, just when I'm about to give up and return to the Doctor, I think about the sheep who spends her life fearing the wolf, only to be consumed by the shepherd.

NATE  
The shepherd sailed to New York. He's gone, and so is that detective.

LINDA  
Thank God. A moment of peace.

Nate looks at the top of his worn shoes.

LINDA (cont'd)  
Is there something you're not saying?

NATE  
The folk who bought this house will be here in the morning. We gotta find you a new hiding place.

Linda's eyes well with tears.

Nate dries her eyes.

NATE (cont'd)  
You'll be free. I promise.

Linda looks into his caring eyes.

LINDA  
Oh, Nate, you're my angel.

NATE  
One of many.

EXT. MATTHEW BUCKLEY HOUSE - DAY

Matthew steps from the carriage.

Kate runs from the house and into Matthew's open arms. Kate proudly shows Matthew her new crucifix necklace.

KATE  
Look, Father. Sean, a new boy in town, gave this to me.

MATTHEW  
Oh, you don't say. It's nice.

KATE  
It's a crucifix. It has Jesus on it.

Matthew smiles.

KATE (cont'd)  
Mom says Sean's a dirty papist.

MATTHEW  
Did she, now?

KATE  
What's a dirty papist?

MATTHEW  
A Catholic, my dear.

KATE  
Is that different than a Christian?

MATTHEW  
We are all people of the book.

INT. MATTHEW BUCKLEY HOUSE/KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Matthew tucks Kate into bed.

Kate takes off her crucifix necklace. She gazes at the crucifix and her face contorts as she ponders.

KATE  
Why did people hunt down the nicest, most good person ever and kill him?

Matthew is rendered speechless.

KATE (cont'd)  
Is it true Linda ran away to New  
York?

Matthew nods.

KATE (cont'd)  
Do you think Linda is scared being  
all alone?

MATTHEW  
She won't be alone for long. The  
Doctor is sailing there as we speak.

Kate gapes and looks bug-eyed at Matthew.

KATE  
He was mean to Linda. He hurt her  
bad. Father, you must find her before  
he does something terrible to her.

MATTHEW  
That's what God's been saying to me.

Matthew kisses Kate on her forehead.

EXT. ROAD TO SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew rides fast and light on horseback. City of Savannah  
in the distance.

EXT. WHARF - SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew walks out of the passenger ship ticket office with a  
ticket in hand for passage to New York City.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Nate cleans up and pack tools into his wagon.

Mrs. Corbin, Ben and Sam ride up in a carriage with a wagon  
laden with their possessions right behind.

Sam and Ben step down from the carriage.

Nate gapes as he watches Sam and Ben lend Mrs. Corbin a hand  
as she steps down from the carriage.

Mrs. Corbin catches Nates gaze. They come eye to eye. She  
smiles.



INT. NEW CARRIAGE HOUSE - DAY

Nate barges in so fast that Linda has little chance to hide.

LINDA  
What's wrong with you? Shut the door.

NATE  
You're never gonna believe this.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Nate guides Linda by the hand toward the house. Linda squints in the sunlight. Nate and Linda walk up to the front door. Nate knocks. Door opens. It's a smiling Mrs. Corbin. Her smile widens at the sight of Linda. She invites Nate and Linda inside.

INT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Nate shakes hands with Ben and Sam. Mrs. Corbin hugs Linda.

MRS. CORBIN  
God is good. Rumor has it that you're  
in New York.

Linda grins.

MRS. CORBIN (cont'd)  
The doctor's chasing a ghost. Well  
done. Please, stay with us until we  
can be certain of your safety.

LINDA  
I'd like that very much, indeed.

Mrs. Corbin gazes at Linda's worn and filthy dress. Linda is suddenly self-conscious.

MRS. CORBIN  
This simply will not do.

INT. MEN'S CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Matthew tries on a traveling suit for size. He looks into the mirror as TAILOR marks his pants.

In the mirror, Matthew has a view of the street through the front window. He catches a glimpse of Mrs. Corbin stepping down from a hack.

Matthew runs to the front window to the Tailor's surprise.  
Matthew watches Mrs. Corbin enter a Women's Dress Shop.

Tailor protests Matthew's rude behavior.

Matthew runs out the store with his pants marked and pinned.

EXT. WOMEN'S DRESS SHOP - DAY

Matthew speaks with HACK DRIVER and hands him a few coins.  
Hack Driver points off down the road.

Matthew nods. He crosses the street to Men's Clothing Store.

INT. MEN'S CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Tailor's upset by what he perceives as Matthew's rudeness.

MATTHEW

Have you ever wanted to see New York?

Tailor gives him a quizzical look.

Matthew gives Tailor the ticket for passage to New York.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Nate and crew carry furniture and other belongings from the wagon into the house. They're hot and sweaty.

INT. NEW HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Ben and Sam unpack dishes.

Nate and a man from his crew carry in the kitchen table.

NATE

Have you seen Linda?

Ben and Sam shake their heads.

EXT. NEW HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Linda pumps water from the well. It takes her several priming pumps before water flows into the bucket.

EXT. NEW HOUSE/STREET - DAY

Hunter is passing by when he catches a glimpse of Linda. He stops and peers at her to get a good look.

HUNTER  
I'll be damned.

Hunter picks up the pace and is out of sight before Linda has a chance to notice him.

INT. BARBER SHOP - SAVANNAH - DAY

Matthew is being shaved. Captain Pete is getting his beard trimmed.

SAILOR runs in and up to Captain Pete.

SAILOR  
The Elaina never made New York. She capsized in a storm off Hatteras.

Captain Pete springs to his feet.

CAPTAIN PETE  
How many souls?

Sailor's head droops.

SAILOR  
All lost, sir. Passengers and crew.

CAPTAIN PETE  
God have mercy on them.

Sailor follows Captain Pete out the door.

MATTHEW  
The Doctor.

INT. NEW HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Table elegantly set for a romantic candlelit dinner for two.

Sam and Ben, both dressed as butlers, stand like servants against the wall.

Nate, dressed in borrowed finery, anxiously paces.

Mrs. Corbin lights candles in candlesticks on the table.

Linda comes into the room. She's stunning in a new formal gown.

LINDA  
I've never had a new dress before.

Nate gazes at Linda. He's rendered breathless by her beauty.  
Mrs. Corbin beams.

Sam and Ben exchange grins and winks before returning to their stoic stance as servants.

NATE  
I'm so proud to call you mine.

Linda gives him a look.

NATE (cont'd)  
That came out wrong.

Linda nods and kisses him.

Mrs. Corbin walks into the kitchen.

Ben slides out a chair for Linda. She sits.

Sam pours Linda a glass of wine, then fills Nate's glass.

Mrs. Corbin walks in from the kitchen with a serving tray and sets it on the buffet.

Linda's thrown off kilter as Mrs. Corbin serves dinner.

Mrs. Corbin ushers Sam and Ben from the room.

Nate and Linda are eye to eye across the large table. She laughs and Nate does as well.

Nate gathers up his dinner and moves to sit next to Linda.

Nate takes her hand.

NATE (cont'd)  
I love you.

EXT. NEW HOUSE/YARD - NIGHT

Hunter stealthily makes his way to the back of the house. He is armed with a long knife and pistol.

INT. NEW HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Nate and Linda have the time of their lives as they enjoy this once in a lifetime romantic dining experience.

INT. NEW HOUSE/KITCHEN

Mrs. Corbin, Ben and Sam prepare tea and dessert.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Hunter pries open the parlor window and climbs into the dark room.

INT. NEW HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Corbin, Ben and Sam set tea and dessert upon trays.

INT. NEW HOUSE/PARLOR

Hunter stealthily makes his way to dining room passageway.

INT. NEW HOUSE/DINING ROOM

Ben and Sam serve dessert to Linda and Nate. Mrs. Corbin pours two cups of tea. Everyone is in joyous conversation, so they fail to notice Hunter as he steps through the passageway into the room. Mrs. Corbin is nearest the passageway. She holds a tea service and faces the table with her back to the passageway.

Hunter wraps his arm tight around Mrs. Corbin's waist.

Mrs. Corbin screams and drops the tea service.

Tea services crashes on the floor.

Nate is frozen with fear.

Ben and Sam react too late. They stand ready for a fight.

We lose sight of Linda in the room.

Hunter has his pistol nuzzled tight against Mrs. Corbin's head.

HUNTER

Give me the nigger girl and no one gets hurt.

Linda steps toward Hunter.

Nate steps between Linda and Hunter.

NATE

No.

Mrs. Corbin winces as the pistol is pushed against her head.

Mrs. Corbin notices that a candlestick is missing from the table. She notices Linda has a hand tucked behind her back.

Mrs. Corbin and Linda come eye to eye. Neither flinch.

Linda steps forward, just out of reach of Hunter.

LINDA

(to Hunter)

Unhand her and I'll go quietly.

HUNTER

I ain't trustin' no nigger. You're both comin'.

Something catches Linda's eye in the dark parlor behind Hunter. She glances over Hunter's shoulder.

Hunter instinctively turns to follow Linda's gaze.

Matthew stands in the dark parlor.

Hunter and Matthew come eye to eye.

Matthew makes an aggressive move toward Hunter.

Hunter aims his pistol at Matthew.

Linda smashes the candlestick into Hunter's head.

Hunter fires wide of Matthew and collapses on the floor.

Linda drops the candlestick. She shakes with adrenaline.

Nate takes Linda in his arms.

Mrs. Corbin comes face to face with Matthew.

MRS. CORBIN

Please, don't take Linda away.

MATTHEW  
The Doctor was lost at sea.

Linda gasps.

Matthew looks Linda in the eyes.

MATTHEW (cont'd)  
I'm a Southerner by birth. My grandfather traded in slaves. You have helped me to see it as a pitiable and degrading business, and I feel ashamed to be connected with it. I think I now understand how you have suffered.

LINDA  
God alone knows how I have suffered.

Matthew nods.

Hunter begins to stir.

Matthew binds Hunter's hands behind his back.

LINDA (cont'd)  
May I look at his head?

MATTHEW  
Oh, he needs his head examined, all right. But, not by you. You've done enough. Let me take it from here.

Matthew gets Hunter to his feet.

MATTHEW (cont'd)  
You're coming with me. I'll see to it you never bother these nice people ever again. You hear me?

Hunter nods and grimaces in pain.

Matthew addresses the room.

MATTHEW (cont'd)  
As far as I know, Linda's in New York.

Matthew tips his hat and marches Hunter through the parlor and out the front door.

Breeze blows through the wide-open window in the parlor.

EXT. NEW HOUSE/STREET - DAY

Sam assists Mrs. Corbin into a carriage.

Mrs. Corbin waves to Sam as she rides off.

INT. NEW HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Nate walks up to Linda and they embrace.

LINDA  
Doctor's really gone, isn't he?

NATE  
I hope he made his peace with God. Do you forgive him?

LINDA  
I know I must. I cannot say if I can. The man was horrid to me while he lived, and his memory is horrid now. Some wrongs a grave can't bury.

EXT. FLINT HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Mrs. Corbin comes knocking. Mrs. Flint, dressed all in black, answers the door.

MRS. CORBIN  
Mrs. Flint, I've come with a generous offer for Linda's freedom.

INT. BANK - DAY

Mrs. Flint sits across the desk from Bank Manager.

BANK MANAGER  
I'm sorry for your loss, Mrs. Flint. The doctor was a good man.

Mrs. Flint looks deadpan.

BANK MANAGER (cont'd)  
I understand it is your intention to grant Linda her freedom?

MRS. FLINT  
Yes.

Bank Manager slides a manumission document in front of her.



BANK MANAGER  
Please, sign here.

Mrs. Flint signs the manumission document.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Mrs. Flint hands the manumission document to Mrs. Corbin.

Mrs. Corbin steps into her carriage and rides away.

Mrs. Flint cries alone.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - SAVANNAH - DAY

Dusk. Mrs. Corbin rides up in a carriage. Ben and Sam come out from the house to greet her.

INT. NEW HOUSE/PARLOR - DAY

Linda reads the Bible with Nate in the fading light. She's dressed in a well-worn skirt and cotton blouse.

Mrs. Corbin comes into the room. Nate and Linda go to greet her. Mrs. Corbin presents Linda with a nice new shawl. Linda politely protests.

MRS. CORBIN  
I saw it in a shop window. Please,  
take it and wear it in good health.

Linda smiles and puts on the shawl.

LINDA  
I will pay you for it, one day.

MRS. CORBIN  
It's a gift.

LINDA  
Please, allow me to earn a few things  
I can truly call my own with money I  
earned. Perhaps, I could work for  
you, here, in this house?

Mrs. Corbin smiles warmly.

MRS. CORBIN  
Better yet, would you like me to make  
introductions with the doctors in  
Savannah?

LINDA  
How long would it be before someone  
turned me in for the reward?

MRS. CORBIN  
You're done hiding, Linda.

Linda gives her a look.

Mrs. Corbin produces the manumission paper from her bosom.  
She presents the manumission paper to Linda.

MRS. CORBIN (cont'd)  
This has been kept close to my heart.

Linda takes the manumission paper and reads it. Her face  
makes it clear that the words strike her like a blow.

NATE  
What is it?

Linda hands Nate the manumission paper. Nate struggles to  
read a few words.

NATE (cont'd)  
I think this says you're a free  
woman. Mrs. Corbin, is this true?

MRS. CORBIN  
Yes, Nate. I purchased Linda's  
freedom from Widow Flint.

Linda looks peeved.

Mrs. Corbin looks Linda in the eyes.

MRS. CORBIN (cont'd)  
Linda, you're free now. That's all  
that matters.

LINDA  
You cannot possibly understand what  
matters to me.

Linda glances at the manumission paper in Nate's hands.

LINDA (cont'd)  
 I despise Mrs. Flint for demanding  
 payment for what never rightfully  
 belonged to her.

Linda walks out.

NATE  
 You did a Christian act.

MRS. CORBIN  
 Go to her.

INT. NEW HOUSE/DINING ROOM

Linda gazes out the window. Tears moisten her face.

Nate approaches and stands beside her.

LINDA  
 I must confess, I feel as if a heavy  
 load has been lifted from my weary  
 shoulders.

NATE  
 You earned this. You did this.

Linda turns and comes eye to eye with Nate.

NATE (cont'd)  
 Mrs. Corbin has repaid your kindness.  
 You risked your safety to save her  
 son. And there's the farmer's son,  
 and that slave hunter's daughter.  
 Linda, you made your own miracles  
 and, just like flies round a pecan  
 pie, they're all round you.

LINDA  
 No, Nate. God has raised me up.

EXT. YARD - NEW HOUSE - DAY

Beautiful day. Nate stands off to the side of a PREACHER  
 (male, adult). Sam and Ben stand witness.

SUPER: "A few months later..."

Near the house, Mrs. Corbin fixes Linda's veil. Linda is in  
 a simple, yet elegant, wedding gown.

Linda looks up at the clear blue sky and smiles.

LINDA

I'd never realized what grand things  
air and sunlight are till I had been  
deprived of them.

Mrs. Corbin walks with Linda up to the Preacher, Nate and  
her sons. She takes her place at Linda's side.

PREACHER

Join hands.

Nate and Linda join hands.

PREACHER (cont'd)

Let us pray. Ephesians 5:21. Be  
willing to obey each other. Do this  
because you respect Christ. Wives, be  
under the authority of your husbands,  
as of the Lord. The husband is the  
head of the wife, as Christ is the  
head of the church. The church is  
Christ's body. Christ is the Savior  
of the body. Amen.

NATE

Amen.

Linda is deadpan.

PREACHER

May I hear an amen?

LINDA

Nate, I will love you and cherish you  
all of my days. I will remain  
faithful to you and be with you  
always, in sickness and health, in  
poverty and wealth, until death do us  
part. However, I will never obey, nor  
be under the authority of, another  
earthly man. That is my vow. Do you  
accept?

NATE

I do.

Linda kisses Nate.

INT. NEW HOUSE/MRS. CORBIN BEDROOM - DAY

Mrs. Corbin packs clothes into a trunk with Linda's help.

LINDA  
I don't understand. Why move back to  
the old plantation?

MRS. CORBIN  
There's God's work to be done.  
Besides, you've a husband now. He'll  
take care of you.

Linda gives her a look.

MRS. CORBIN (cont'd)  
I mean, you'll look after each other.

Linda grins.

MRS. CORBIN (cont'd)  
Sam is the picture of health, because  
of you. I'm in your debt.

Linda scoffs.

MRS. CORBIN (cont'd)  
Yes, Linda, I owe you everything. He  
could have perished that night.  
Truly, such souls as yours are the  
kingdom of heaven.

Linda cast her eyes downward.

MRS. CORBIN (cont'd)  
We will visit for Christmas. Would  
you like anything from the  
plantation?

LINDA  
Just for you, Sam and Ben to return  
to us in good health.

MRS. CORBIN  
That's a promise.

LINDA  
Nate and I will look after this place  
for you. And that's a promise.

Mrs. Corbin hugs Linda.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Linda and Nate see Mrs. Corbin, Ben and Sam off as they ride away in a carriage, followed by a wagon with their things.

INT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Linda puts away the few articles of Mrs. Corbin's clothes that she left behind.

Linda's surprised to discover an envelope buried under the clothes. She picks up the envelope. It's addressed to her. She opens the envelope and reads the letter within. She's overwhelmed with emotion.

LINDA

Nate! Nate, come quickly!

Nate runs in.

NATE

What's the matter?

Linda holds up the letter.

LINDA

Mrs. Corbin is going to more than fairly compensate us for taking care of this place while she's away. In time, we'll earn enough to secure a place of our very own.

Nate embraces Linda.

NATE

We're in high cotton, now.

INT. NEW HOUSE/FOYER - DAY

KNOCKING at the front door.

Linda, a few years older, descends the main staircase.

SUPER: "A few years later..."

Linda answers the door; it's a mother and her sick child.

MOTHER

We're here to see the doctor. Please fetch him for us.

LINDA

I am she.

Mother gives her a confused look.

LINDA (cont'd)

Please, come in.

Mother and child enter.

LINDA (cont'd)

(To child)

My name is Linda. What's yours?

Door closes.

INT. NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Linda's awake in bed. She smiles at Nate, who's snoring, sound asleep, next to her. She clutches her wooden cross necklace and smiles.

LINDA (V.O.)

My story ends with freedom from the power of slaveholders; and though that's not saying a great deal, considering I'm reliant on the good graces of a white woman, it's a vast improvement in my condition. The dream of my life is not yet realized. I wish to walk in the same sunshine as white people and not in the shadow of Jim Crow. That day will come. I pray for my children's sake more than for my own.

ON BLACK: "Inspired by *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs."

FADE OUT.