ASHANTI CRY

Written by

Milton Boothe

FADE IN:

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD - 1807

EXT. THE HIGH SEAS - MISTY DAY

Wide open ocean. Dark. Misty. SLAVER, slowly charts its path through the dark waters of the Atlantic. We see its name: THE FELOZ. White sails flutter loudly in the high winds. Seagulls, SQUAWKING noisily fly from mast to mast.

INT. BELOW DECK - THE FELOZ - DARKNESS

MOANS. GROANS. CRIES. Men, women and children, voices all blended together. We hear the sound of waves constantly beating against the side of the vessel. We hear voices, coming down from above. Incoherent. Angry.

We now see naked black bodies - literally hundreds of them, huddled together in the darkness. Men. Women. Children. Many stacked on shelves like cargo, some lying on the floor, filthy, some living, some dead. We see others, sitting between each others legs, stowed so closely together that there very little room for any sort of movement.

ADISA, seventeen, muscular, Ashanti, lies on his back on a wooden plank. He stares up blankly, unblinking.

A lone ray of sunlight find its way in through an opening in the side of the vessel, and dances around on Adisa's face, but mostly between the eyes. His expression is one of hopelessness.

Adisa tries to change his position. His attempt is futile. Someone is rigidly close to him, They are shackled together by the ankle. Adisa pokes him in the side, he doesn't move. He pokes him again, still he doesn't move. He's dead. Adisa exhales, a long mournful sigh.

FLASHBACK:

FIVE WEEKS EARLIER

GHANA, WEST AFRICA

EXT. GRASSLANDS - EVENING

Late evening. The sun is on its way down, slowly creeping behind the distant mountain.

Adisa sits on a large stone, armed with a long spear, watching over his herd of goats, which is grazing in the tall grass. He looks up at the sun, gets up, stretches.

He Peeps down on his village, which is not too far away. He quickly rounds up the herd, guides them into the wooded pen, and pushes up the gate securely. Spear over his shoulder, he begins to walk down a narrow path through the bushes, headed towards the village. The dying sunlight glistens on the muscles of his shirtless back.

Suddenly, SHOUTING. It's coming from the village. Adisa stops, jumps up on a nearby rock, investigates.

Adisa realizes that they have visitors, but also quickly realizes that they have not come in peace. About a dozen or so, strange looking WHITE MEN armed with long guns charge into the village. They are followed by a large band of BLACK RAIDERS, armed with spears, clubs, and cutlasses. Gunshots echo across the valley. The village is under attack.

Adisa SCREAMS, jumps off the rock, and charges down into the village, spear in hand.

EXT. VILLAGE - EVENING

SCREAMING. SHOUTING. Pandemonium reigns. Several dead bodies already lie on the ground. Adisa charges up behind one of the invaders, runs his spear through him. The man screams, goes down, his black skin instantly covered with blood. Three others, black, armed with clubs and cutlasses, charge at him. Agilely, Adisa swiftly steps to the side, screams, takes out the one in the middle with a solid thrust into the chest. The man lets out a blood-curdling howl, falls to the ground. Blood spurts out of his chest. Adisa, spear now red with blood, faces the other two, but is brought down by a blow to the back of the head. They descend down on him like a pack of dogs, hitting him all over with their clubs. He blacks out. They bind him with ropes.

Adisa revives. Tries to move. Can't. His arms are tied behind his back and his legs tightly bound together. He looks up, locks eyes with his FATHER, bound in a similar manner.

ADISA

Papa - Papa...

His father shakes his head sadly. Defeated. Adisa hangs down his head. The shouts and screams subside. The raiders chat excitedly among themselves. Women and children now begin to sob, cry and moan.

Two of them walk over to Adisa and drag him roughly to his feet. They tie a rope tightly around his neck, loosen the one around his legs, but just enough to allow him to walk. They drag him over to the others, who are already tied up - one to the other - forming a human convoy. They tie Adisa to the convoy, making him the leader. Everyone has their hands bound behind their backs - men, woman and children alike. A LANKY WHITE MAN, early forties, very tall, with a long gun over his shoulder, appears to be in charge. He walks around and inspects the proceedings.

LANKY WHITE MAN

Can we get moving now? We must reach the shore by tomorrow night.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sure, we can.

The man waves his gun aggressively at the convoy.

LANKY WHITE MAN

Git! Git! Bloody, lazy bastards!
Move it.

The convoy begins to move out slowly.

LANKY WHITE MAN (CONT'D)

Come on. Move it, you bloody, black sons-of-bitches!

Adisa turns around and looks behind. The entire village is ablaze. It's quickly burning to the ground.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Darkness. The night creatures begin to sing their song. The raiders stop to rest for the night. They light a fire quickly, and begin to prepare food. They stuff themselves like gluttons, drink, laugh, cuss, way into the night. Adisa sits up through the night, listens to the cries of his people.

EARLY NEXT MORNING

Crimson skies. The raiders rise up early, barking loud orders, as they drag the convoy to its feet.

LANKY WHITE MAN

Move it! Lazy, bloody, black bastards!

The convoy moves. The moaning and crying begin again.

MID MORNING

Black backs glisten in the sun, as the human convoy slowly moves through the woods. A muffled scream, someone falls to the ground, jerking the convoy to an abrupt halt. A BEARDED WHITE MAN, mid thirties, walks over to the fallen captive, a middle aged man. He pulls out a knife, cuts the ropes around his neck, and orders the convoy on. He leaves him on the path to die.

BEARDED WHITE MAN
Weak son-of-a bitch! Wouldn't be of
much value anyway.

LATE EVENING

The convoy wearily makes it way through the bushes. The groaning has gotten louder. Two more fall, a man and a woman this time. They cut them from the convoy, kill them both by cutting their throats. Screams and gasps go up from the convoy.

They continue on through the woods. Adisa leads the convoy up to the brow of a hill, cringes, as he sees the ocean below him. The raiders celebrate with loud shouts, as they herd the captives down to the beach. Two large ships are anchored out in the sea. Sails flutter loudly in the strong winds. Stark fear is written on every face.

They walk across the sand, then up to a huge, ancient looking, stone building, which stands right by the seaside. They heard the captives in through the narrow entrance.

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

It's dark and murky. The building has no windows, only a narrow slot that leads out to the sea. They dismantle the convoy, shackle each person individually to the wall. They walk around and count the captives.

They gather together in the center of the building, negotiating, boisterously. After some semblance of an agreement, the lanky white man counts some coins and places them in the hands of a burly looking black man. The black man is dissatisfied, he protests loudly. The white man places some more coins in his hand. This time he smiles. He bows to the white man, and with a satisfied grin on his face, walks out of the building. The other black raiders trail out behind him.

Adisa brow is all knitted up as he sits on the ground and observes the proceedings.

Adisa's hands and feet are so closely shackled to the wall, allowing him very little movement. He tries to take a nap, but is unable to. The sporadic gusts of cold night wind that find their way in through holes in the wall, keep him awake right through the night.

INT. DUNGEON - DAY

They bring in another large group of captives - men, women, children. The sound of suffering is continuous. People relieve themselves right where they are.

A group of men come around with pails filled with stale bread, which they poke down the throat of each captive.

ANGRY VOICE (O.S.)
Just give then enough to keep them alive, you blasted idiots!

LATER IN THE DAY

Another large batch of captives arrive. The building is now completely full. The sound of human suffering becomes even more intense.

INT. DUNGEON - EARLY MORNING

A charcoal fire is lit in the center of the building. Soon several branding irons are sitting on the coals, glowing red hot. The captives stare on apprehensively, expecting the worse. Their worst fears are realized as their captors walk around and rip off their clothes.

The first scream pierces the air. Adisa winces. He sees the white puff of smoke, rising, as hot iron comes in contact with human flesh. One by one every single captive is held down and branded - men, women, children. The screams are earsplitting.

Four men grab Adisa, hold him down. A fifth one administers the branding iron. Adisa muscles up, HOWLS, as the iron burns into the flesh of his back. He instantly looses control of his bladder, a stream of urine runs along the ground. Cries of anguish reverberate all around the building.

LATER THAT DAY

Adisa's raises up his head, disturbed out of a brief nap by some loud shouting.

VOICE (O.S.)

(shouts above the noise)
...and prepare the cargo for
boarding! Shackle them in pairs!
Move it, you slouchy drunkards!

They come around again, this time they release all the captives the from the wall shackles, but put chains around their ankles, and shackle them in pairs. They drag them up to the opening, which leads out to the sea. Adisa watches in trepidation, as they line them up, one pair behind the other, totally cognizant that the journey into the unknown is about to begin.

The loading begins. The slot is only wide enough for one person to go through at a time, so they push each pair through, one poor soul behind the other. It's useless to put up any sort of resistance.

A large plank provides a walkway from the building to a waiting canoe, which bounces rhythmically on the rough waves.

Sporadic shouts, constantly mix in with the roar of the angry waves, as the loading of the cargo proceeds.

ADISA'S POV

Adisa peeps out through a hole in the wall. He sees two large ships awaiting the cargo, anchored a little distance off from the shore. He watches as the canoe sails out to the ship, filled with black bodies. The canoe pulls alongside the ship. Pair by pair, the sailors drag the Africans on deck. No one dares put up any resistance.

BACK TO SCENE

Suddenly, a loud SHOUT. A YOUTH has somehow managed to free himself. He smashes one of them in the face with his elbow. The man goes down. He makes a desperate run for freedom, but doesn't get far. A loud EXPLOSION reverberates around the walls of the building. All the captives, including Adisa, fall to the ground in fright. Adisa slowly opens his eyes, knowing exactly what to expect. He sees the youth lying face downwards, motionless. Blood oozes out of a gaping hole in the back of his head. The lanky white man runs over to him, smoking gun in his hand.

LANKY WHITE MAN Bloody idiot!

VOICE (O.S.)

There goes the bloody profit.

EXT. DECK OF THE FELOZ - DAY

They pull Adisa and his neighbor, who is shackled to him, out of the canoe, and drag them onto the deck of the ship.

A despicable crew of SAILORS greet them. Quite a vile looking bunch indeed - white men, rough, unkempt, long haired, drunkards, bearded. All are armed to the teeth, with pistols in their waistbands and long guns hung over their backs.

Adisa comes face to face with a ferocious-looking fellow. He holds a scourge with many twisted thongs threateningly in his hand. He responds to the name JACK, as another sailor shouts to him from across the deck.

Late thirties, evil looking, grotesque, Jack has a long scar running down from the right side of his forehead, across his nose, and down to the left side of his chin. Jack spits into Adisa's face, pushes him out of the way, walks off. Adisa glares after him, then wipes the spit away from his face with the back of his hand.

Hundreds of Africans, stand and stare into space like zombies. Naked. The festered sores on their backs, make the branding markings indistinct. On every face, we see anguish, sorrow, hopelessness, dejection, all mixed together.

The sailors walk around and separate males from females. They make then sit down in rows, while A YOUNG SAILOR, early twenties, walks through the rows, counts, records in a logbook.

We see the CAPTAIN for the first time - mid forties, pot bellied, speaks with a deep booming voice.

CAPTAIN

What's taking you so long, sailor?

YOUNG SAILOR

I have a count, sir.

CAPTAIN

How many?

YOUNG SAILOR

Total count 562, sir - 336 males and 226 females.

CAPTAIN

Splendid. Let's see how many of this lot we can keep alive.

Confusion now reigns on deck, as the sailors noisily force the Africans back on their feet and herd them down into a dark hole, which appears to lead right into the pits of hell.

FADE TO BLACK.

PRESENT TIME

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE FELOZ - DARKNESS

The trapdoor squeaks on its rusty inches as it is pulled open. A beam of light shoots through the darkness. Adisa, momentarily blinded, closes his eyes tightly. We hear voices. Adisa raises up his head, sees Jack and three other SAILORS descending down the ladder with pieces of cloth tied over their nostrils. Cussing continuously, they walk around and remove the bodies of the dead, including Adisa's neighbor. Jack stares down into Adisa's face, growls.

JACK

This place is <u>stink!</u> Bloody bastards are pissing, shitting, and dying, all in one!

SAILOR #1

The rate these critters are dying at, we'll sure be lucky if we even cover the expenses of this voyage.

JACK

That's the captain's damn problem.

SAILOR #2

Damn right.

Adisa watches them as they go about removing the dead bodies - five in all - cussing all the time.

EXT. DECK OF THE FELOZ - DAY

Adisa bursts on deck in front of the others. He fills his lungs with the fresh sea air. It's chaos and confusion, as they rush out onto deck, shouting. The stronger ones lunge out in a frenzy, hungry for fresh air. Those who are weak, and those unable to walk, are hauled out, and laid on their backs.

Adisa limps around, his face knitted up, as he tries to get the circulation going in his legs. He comes face to face with Jack again. Jack glares at him with contempt written all over his horrid face. There are about three-dozen sailors on deck - heavy-drinking, foul-mouthed bastards. Some have large black bottles in their hands, which they swig from, and pass around to the others.

Suddenly, two YOUTHS break out of the crowd, SCREAMING crazily. They make a mad rush to the side of the ship, begin to scramble over. Reacting instantly, Jack and two others bolt across to grab them. Too late. The youths jump. One loud splash, instantly followed by another.

The captain bursts onto the scene, SCREAMING. Raging mad, he pulls his pistol and whacks the closest fellow across the head. The sailor goes down with a muffled yell.

CAPTAIN (yells)

Bloody, drunken idiots! Who told you to unshackle them? Get them back under deck! Now! You blasted set of jackasses!

Panic reign among the sailors. They quickly surround the Africans, herd them up, push them back down into the pit.

EXT. DECK OF THE FELOZ - LATER THAT DAY

They bring them back on deck for a second time. This time it's more orderly and controlled. One by one, they shackle all adult males with heavy chains around their ankles — considerably restricting their movements. They are more lenient with the women and children, they walk about freely.

They sit them down in rows, then haul up water from the sea. They walk through the rows and douse everyone thoroughly with the sea water, in an effort to wash away some of the filth.

A BALDING MAN, mid fifties, long white coat, appears. He walks through the rows and examines each African. With a nod of the head, he makes a selection. Three sailors walk behind him, pull out the ones selected, separate them into a group by themselves. Among these selected, many have bad cuts and sores. Others appear very sick, unable stand without support.

The "doctor" walks around and makes another round of selection from this group. Those perceived to be beyond help are taken out from the group. They are dragged away and throw them overboard, eight in all - three young females, two elderly males, and three children. The young sailor with the logbook keeps record. Adisa stares on in disbelief.

The "doctor" comes back around to those sitting in the rows. He dresses the sore on their backs with some sort of ointment - the sores caused by the branding.

The doctor finishes, and disappears. The sailors now walk through the rows handing out food in battered metal containers. Adisa, and many others, eat hungrily, but some refuse to eat. Cussing insistently, they grab hold of those who refuse to eat, and force the food down their throats with a crude mouth-opening implement. Adisa looks on in disgust. The Africans submit, it's no use - they can't win. The sailors laugh raucously, obviously enjoying the day's deeds.

Everyone has now finished eating. The sailors walk around and kick the containers out of the way, into one large pile in a corner of the deck, clearing the area.

Gesturing threateningly with their whips, they order the Africans to their feet, and instruct them to begin dancing.

The men limp around, groaning painfully, as the metal cuts into the flesh of their ankles. The sailors laugh.

A few, unable to cope with the pain, slow down a bit. Whips crack instantly, whacking them across the back. They holler out in agony and pick back up the pace.

Adisa observes the whips. They consist of nine cords coated with tar. Each cord has a knot tied at the end, definitely designed to inflict maximum pain.

The agonizing exercise session is eventually over. The males are herded back below deck, but the women and children are allowed to remain on deck for a little while longer.

INT. BELOW DECK - THE FELOZ - NIGHT

Loud SCREAMS jolt Adisa out of his sleep. He jumps up and peers through the darkness. He sees half a dozen drunken sailors making their way out of the pit. Each has a young, naked, black girl over his shoulder. The girls kick and scream all the way. Adisa clenches his fists in anger.

EXT. DECK OF THE FELOZ - DAY

Two more dead bodies was brought up and thrown overboard. Adisa limps around the deck, his ankles swollen. Suddenly, he sees her. He stops in his tracks and stares at her. KAMILAH, sixteen, beautiful, with skin as smooth as velvet. Her eyes are beautiful, her lips are full, and she has perfect breasts. His stare catches her attention. She stares back at him for a brief moment, smiles, and then turns away.

Adisa takes a deep breath. Slowly, shyly, and painfully, he hobbles over to where she is standing.

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

I-I am Adisa, What - what is your name? (ENGLISH ON SCREEN)

GIRL

Kamilah.

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

What's - what's the meaning of your name? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

She looks into his eyes and smiles sadly.

KAMILAH

(Ashanti dialect)
The perfect one. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

What's the name of you village? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Before Kamilah can answer, Adisa looks across and sees Jack, whip raised in hand, charging towards him. He tries to take evasive action. Too late. Jack whacks him solidly across the back. Adisa GRUNTS in agony, loses his balance and topples over. He recovers quickly, jumps to his feet, and scrambles back over to the other side of the deck.

JACK

No talking! No talking! Stupid ape!

EXT. THE HIGH SEAS - DAY

Open waters. Misty. Strong winds. The FELOZ comes towards us, slowly charting its way through the rough waves. As the ship passes by, we see a school of sharks trailing behind. Ahead, a storm looms on the horizon. Ominous dark clouds seem to reach down and touch the ocean. The FELOZ heads straight into the storm. The FELOZ is now being tossed about by the angry wind.

INT. BELOW DECK - THE FELOZ - DARKNESS

The winds howl unrelentingly. We hear the crew SHOUTING and CUSSING above, panicking. Their voices are very quickly drowned out by the howling wind. Women and children begin to SCREAM. People are tossed about all over the place, as the ship rocks violently in the storm.

Seawater comes gushing in forcefully, through openings in the side of the ship. The deafening HOWL continues. Adisa holds tightly on to a piece of board which protrudes from the side of the ship, to keep from sliding off into the filth below. The storm rages and on and on. Eventually, the winds die down. SHOUTS of jubilation come down from the men on deck.

EXT. DECK OF THE FELOZ - DAY

Kamilah stands by herself over by the far corner of the deck. Adisa sees her. He looks around for Jack. Doesn't see him. He quickly hobbles across to her.

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)
How did you make it through the storm? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

KAMILAH

(Ashanti dialect)

It was awful - I thought I was going to die. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)
Are you saying then that you
wouldn't have preferred death like most of the others? [ENGLISH
ON SCREEN]

KAMILAH

(Ashanti dialect)

Did you want to die? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

No. I wanted to live - I think positively at all times.[ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Adisa glances across his shoulder. He locks eyes with Jack, who glares at him, then rushes across with his whip, and lashes at him with all his might.

JACK

(screams)

Stubborn son-of-a-bitch!

Adisa, as agile as a cat, easily ducks out of harm's way. Jack looses his balance and crashes into the side of the ship. He roars angrily. Kamilah smiles approvingly.

Adisa quickly hobbles back across deck. A few of the men threat themselves to a rare bout of good laughter.

Jack recovers. He is coming at Adisa again - a vengeful grin on his hideous face. Something's happening - it stops Jack suddenly in his tracks. The sailors begin to wave, shout, and laugh wildly. Some pull guns and fire shots in the air.

JACK (CONT'D)
(screams)

Land! Land!

OTHER VOICES (O.S.) (screams)

Land! Land! Bloody Hell! Land!

Adisa stares out over the side of the ship. He sees a range of mountains in the distance. The ship slowly approaches a pretty white sand beach. The lush green vegetation is beautiful. Tall coconut trees sway in the wind. The Africans fall silent, they stare at one another apprehensively.

We see another ship docked offshore - the same one that was in the harbor off the coast of Ghana at the beginning of the voyage. The FELOZ finally comes to a standstill. The rowdy sailors continue to celebrate.

The captain walks out, followed by the young sailor who keeps the records.

CAPTAIN

Enough! Enough! Drunken idiots! Line them up so we can take inventory.

The celebration ends abruptly. They now focus their attention on the Africans, who hey drag them about roughly, and separate into three groups - men, women, children. They Make them sit in rows, then count them, once, then twice. The young sailor records the result in the logbook.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

How many?

YOUNG SAILOR

Three hundred and ninety-six, sir.

CAPTAIN

Okay, men, prepare the cargo! Move it you drunken vagabonds!

The activities on deck quickly intensify. Some walk around remove the chains from the legs of the men, while others come around and place ropes around the necks of everyone.

Others bring fresh water on board. Every person is thoroughly scrubbed down, and then oiled from head to foot.

They drag those with bruises over to the corner. The "doctor" appears again, walks around and dresses their wounds with some sort of ointment.

Another set come around, passing out assorted pieces of clothing among the Africans. They order them to put them on.

At this point, everyone now has on a garment of some sort. Adisa has on a pair of trousers, cut off at the knees.

Adisa sees Kamilah staring across at him. She has on a bright red dress, looking beautiful. He sneaks over to where she is.

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

You-you are beautiful. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

KAMILAH

(Ashanti dislect)

What's the point? Why pay me empty compliments? The future isn't ours. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

Kamilah! Stop talking like that. Ashanti never gives up! As long as I have life - I will find a way out. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

KAMILAH

(Ashanti dialect)

Stop talking crazy, Adisa! You know very well that we will never leave the cursed place - wherever they're taking us - we'll never leave alive. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

While there is life there is hope - God is all powerful. Anywhere they take you Kamilah, I will find you - that I promise you - because I love you. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Adisa places his arms around her, holds her tightly for a brief moment.

ADISA (CONT'D)
(Ashanti dialect)
Look straight into my eyes,
Kamilah. They might have my body in
chains, but they will never control
my mind - that's where the real
power lies. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Tears begin to flow down her cheeks. She forces herself out of his arms, sighs, and walks away. Adisa stares after her.

FADE TO:

INT. SLAVE MARKET - MID MORNING

The atmosphere is carnival like. White men with sun-tanned faces, mill around inside, some attired in neatly tailored suits, others looking as rough and as shabby as the sailors on the ship. Women, elegantly dressed, stand in little groups by themselves, chatting away excitedly.

We see Adisa, hands bound behind his back. They drag him up on a platform, along with all the other able bodied, strong looking, young males. They arrange them in a straight line, and make them stand abreast to one another.

A couple of sailors walk around on the platform - attending to whatever last minute cleaning up and dressing they can - trying to disguise any remaining visible flaws.

Adisa stands defiantly with his face up in the air, as the potential buyers step up on the platform. They chat excitedly, as they walk around and inspect the new arrivals, blowing tobacco smoke in their faces as they go about.

They are thoroughly inspected. Mouths are forced open, teeth examined. They are made to jump up and down. Others are stripped naked and examined for bruises and flaws.

SYLVESTER BRAMWELL, pink faced, tall, middle aged, shows interest in Adisa. JUMBO, black, muscular, ugly, walks behind Bramwell like a dog on a leash. Bramwell walks over to Adisa, rubs his hands all over his body. Examines him thoroughly - even down to his private parts. Adisa grits his teeth in defiance.

After a brief period of negotiation, Bramwell and the captain reach a an agreement. Bramwell pays the agreed sum.

CAPTAIN

All yours. Fine, strong, young nigga - worth every penny.

BRAMWELL

(to captain)

We'll see.

(to Jumbo)

Take him.

JUMBO

Yes, Massa Bramwell.

Jumbo leaps up onto the platform, displays and ugly grin. He grabs the rope around Adisa's neck and drags him roughly off the platform.

EXT. OUTSIDE SLAVE MARKET - DAY

Jumbo drags Adisa out to a large cart, hitched to two horses.

JUMBO

Jump up, nigga boy.

Jumbo chuckles to himself. He pushes Adisa roughly up into the back of the cart, then ties both his hands securely to the rails.

Jumbo has a satisfied grin on his jet black, ugly face. He jumps up into the driver's seat beside Bramwell, lashes at the horses his whip, yells, and sends them on their way.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - DAY

Jumbo guides the horses off the road, in through a large, rusty, iron gate. They travel a fair distance on a hardened dirt road with beautifully manicured lawns on both sides. They go all the way, up to the top of a hill. The cart stops in front of a large white house. Bramwell jumps off.

BRAMWELL

Take him down to George.

JUMBO

Yes, Massa.

Bramwell walks up the steps, disappears through the front door. Screaming and lashing his whip at the horses, Jumbo spins them around, and drives them all the way back down the hill. They turn onto a narrow path, and then end up in front of a row of small dirty huts.

JUMBO (CONT'D)
(yells)

George! George! Git your lazy black ass out here at once! Have a new nigga for you.

VOICE

Stop yelling. I'm coming, Jumbo.

GEORGE, late fifties, balding, pleasant face, shuffles out of one of the huts with a short cutlass in his hand.

JUMBO

Massa wants to teach this African, boy to speak.

George ignores Jumbo. Turns his attention to Adisa. He cuts him free. Adisa jumps down, looks around wildly. Jumbo glares at him, holds the whip threateningly - as if daring him to make a run for it.

GEORGE

(Ashanti dialect)
Follow me, son. Never try to run
away. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Adisa walks slowly behind George. Jumbo yells at the horses, spins them around, and heads back in the opposite direction. Adisa follows George along a row of shabby looking huts.

Out in a field, not very far away, we see a group of slaves laboring in the sun, the sweat glistening on their black backs. A BURLY BLACK MAN, rides around on horseback with long whip in hand. He YELLS, lashes out with the whip. Someone SCREAMS out in agony.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(Ashanti dialect)

This is where you stay - the women and children stay in the huts over yonder - never, ever go over there. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Adisa walks behind George up to door of a small hut. George pushes the door open, leads him inside.

INT. HUT - DAY

Dark. Murky. Dirt floor. There are wooden bunks along both sides of the wall.

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

You Ashanti? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

GEORGE

(Ashanti dialect)

Yes - I once was. But never let Massa Bramwell hear you speaking this way - you have to learn white man's language - I will teach you.[ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

How long have you been here? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

GEORGE

(Ashanti dialect)

Too long, boy. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

My name is Adisa. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

GEORGE

(Ashanti dialect)

That's not important. No one will be calling you by that name.
[ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

INCLIBIT ON BOIG

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

What country is this? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

GEORGE

(Ashanti dialect)

They call it Jamaica. It's a small island. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

And, what is the - [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

GEORGE

(Ashanti dialect)

No more questions - I must get back to Massa.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

But let me warn you one more time, since you are new here - never ever try to run away - they'll boil you alive in the big pot.[ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

George turns around and walks out. Adisa walks across the room, throws himself down on one of the bunks. He lies on his back and closes his eyes.

We hear a horse coming at full gallop. The door bursts open. In walks Jumbo, whip in hand.

JUMBO

On your feet, nigga! Who gave you permission to sleep? You are here to work, African boy!

Adisa instantly jumps to his feet!

JUMBO (CONT'D)

My name is Jumbo - yes, just like that big bad African elephant you used to ride in Africa. I am the boss around here - whatever I say around here is law. Do you understand me, boy!

Adisa just stands there staring into his face.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

Dumb, stupid, nigga!

Jumbo walks around Adisa, sizes him up.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

(switches to Ashanti

dialect)

What's your name, boy? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

Adisa.

JUMBO

(Ashanti dialect - laughs)
Well, listen to me carefully,
African boy - that's no longer your
name. Your name is John. Yes John![ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Adisa nods his head.

JUMBO (CONT'D) (Ashanti accent)

Don't shake you head to me, boy, answer me with your mouth. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

ADISA

(Ashanti dialect)

Yes, sir. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

JUMBO

(Ashanti dialect)

Who are you calling sir? Do I look like a white man to you? My name is Jumbo! Big bad Jumbo! Don't you understand? Are you Africans stupid or what? [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Adisa doesn't respond. He stands and stares into Jumbo's hideous face.

JUMBO (CONT'D)
(Ashanti dialect)

Massa says I should give you the remainder of the day off - so enjoy your beauty nap. But bright and early tomorrow morning, African boy - long before the sun is up - make sure you get your ass out in the fields along with the others.

[ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Jumbo walks up to Adisa and roughly pushes him down onto the bunk. He heads back out through the door laughing contemptuously. We hear the horse galloping away.

The door opens. George stumbles in with a battered black pot in his hand.

GEORGE

(Ashanti dialect)

Eat. You'll be in the fields tomorrow. We will begin your lessons tomorrow night. You look smart enough - you should learn quickly. [ENGLISH ON SCREEN]

Adisa takes the pot gratefully out of George's hand. He gobbles down the food hungrily. George squats on the dirt floor, watches him until he's finished.

George then takes the pot out of his hands and walks out slowly through the door.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - DAY

The plantation covers a wide expanse, acres and acres of sugar cane fields - as far as the eye can see. White OVERSEERS ride about on horseback, all over the plantation, their duty, to make sure that all is in order.

We come up to the factory complex, here we see a frenzy of activity, as White workers and slaves mix together, attending to their various tasks.

The factory building is by far the largest. This is where the sugar cane is converted into sugar granules. Several workshops surround the factory. We see workshops for the blacksmiths, the wheelwrights, the carpenters, the masons, and the coopers. We also see stables for the grinding cattle, and storage rooms for tools and supplies.

Not far away from the factory complex, we see is a small hospital. Almost adjacent to the hospital is the jail.

Some distance away, we see some small white houses. There are the houses in which the white workers live - the overseers, bookkeepers, skilled craftsmen, and the office staff.

Further away we see several rows of shabby looking huts. These house the slaves.

Towering above all the buildings in the factory complex, we see a large cut-stone windmill.

And, majestically perched on top of a hill, far away from the works, but overlooking the entire estate, we see an elegant white house. It glistens magnificently in the sunlight.

LATE EVENING

Dusk descends on the land. The slaves march in from off the fields - men, women, children. Everyone is sweaty, dirty, and exhausted. We hear some of them groaning as they walk in. Dirty, battered, black pots soon sit on open wood fires, as the slaves go about preparing their evening meals. In a spirit of melancholy, they eat, wash themselves, then retire to their respective huts. Silence reigns.

EXT. CANE FIELD - NEXT MORNING

We see the crimson glow, as the morning sun emerges from behind the distant mountain. Adisa rises up early and makes his way out with the others, as they lumber wearily into the cane field. Once in the field, they take up their positions, and get right down to the mundane task of reaping sugar cane.

Jumbo sits on his horse with his whip in his hand. He searches for Adisa, sees him, rides over to him.

JUMBO

(addresses Adisa)

I see that you're a smart nigga - you didn't let me have to come and get you.

Adisa stares up into his face. BASIL, mid fifties, is working close by. Jumbo nudges him with his whip.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

You, Basil! Take the new boy under you wings - teach him the ropes!

BASIL

Yes, Jumbo.

Basil walks over to Adisa, and quickly demonstrates the art of cane cutting. It's a simple, repetitive procedure, Adisa learns quickly. He gets going at a good pace, but as the morning sun bears down on him, he begins to slow down.

BASIL (CONT'D)

(screams at Adisa)

Keep going! Keep going! Jumbo is watching you!

Adisa tries to pick up the pace. Too late. Jumbo forces his thick black lips apart and displays an ugly grin, then charges across and whacks Adisa viciously across his back. Adisa HOWLS, goes down, and writhes in agony.

JUMBO

So you African niggas are weak, eh?

Jumbo is coming at him again. Adisa jumps up to his feet and begins chopping sugar cane like a madman.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

(laughs)

That's the spirit, Ashanti boy.

Jumbo now turns his attention to Basil.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

Come here, Basil. I put you in charge of this fool, and you had him sleeping on the job. Why?

BASTL

I-I-I'm sorry Jumbo, I didn't -- I
didn't --

JUMBO

Well, Basil, you are a lucky man. I'm in a very good mood today, so I'm going to give you a chance this time. Next time you won't be so lucky. Now watch him!

BASIL

Thanks-thanks, Jumbo.

Jumbo spins his horse around and races across to the other side of field to torment some other poor soul.

FADE TO BLACK.

ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - LATE EVENING

Adisa sits beside George under a tree beside the hut, observing the usual after work activities.

GEORGE

You should be okay now - you've learned enough the white man's language to get by. You're a smart one.

ADISA

I had a good teacher.

GEORGE

I can't take all the credit - you were a quick learner.

Jumbo rides up, his ugly "trademark" grin on his face - displaying his dirty, uneven spaced, discolored teeth.

JUMBO

George, how's the African boy coming on. Is he learning anything? His head seems as thick as a rock.

GEORGE

He's okay.

Jumbo rides on.

ADISA

Who does Jumbo think he is. One of these days I'm going to kill that ugly son-of-a-bitch!

GEORGE

Be careful, of Jumbo. He's one of the cruelest slave drivers on this side of the island. His mother is Ashanti, but he was born on the island - he looks down on all those who came across on the ships. He whips his own people mercilessly in the fields, and it is rumored that he has beaten many slaves to death on the plantation where he was before he came here. They say that's why his previous owners sold him - he was causing too much loss to their property. He is a demon, keep out of his way, son.

ADISA

Thanks for the warning, George.

GEORGE

I must get back to my chores now, before Massa misses me.

ADISA

I notice that you don't work in the fields.

GEORGE

No, not any more. I spent eighteen hard years in the fields, but they say that I am now too weak. They have me working around the house - in the kitchen sometimes - in the garden - driving the backras around, and so on. But don't get me wrong; I'm no house slave.

ADISA

What are the backras?

GEORGE

(chuckles)

That's our name for white folks, son.

ADISA

And what is this talk about the house slaves all about?

GEORGE

They're the worst type of human beings God has ever created. They look down on us like dung. (MORE) GEORGE (CONT'D)

They think they're white, because they sleep under the same roof with Massa and his family, and rub shoulders with them everyday in the great house. Be very careful of them; they're traitors to their own race. Many slave rebellions have been put down because of the house slaves - they inform the backras of every plan. I have to go now.

Adisa watches him as he lumbers away slowly.

FADE TO:

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - LATE EVENING

Adisa and George sit under a tree, watching the other slaves as they go about attending to their after work chores.

ADISA

I have to get out of here - I have to find my brothers and my sister.

George does not answer right away, but gives Adisa a long hard stare.

GEORGE

You could have an arm or leg cut off - or be flogged to death - or even hanged. But worse than that, you could be put in the big pot.

ADISA

What is this big pot you've been telling me about?

GEORGE

(sighs deeply)

Come - let me show you.

George pulls himself up painfully. Adisa rises up also, follows behind him through some thick bushes, and out into an opening. A large brass pot, standing of three large stones, greets them. The pot is capable of accommodating three or four grown men. Adisa stares at it in horror.

ADISA

What-what the hell is this?

GEORGE

That's what they do to some slaves when they run away, but thank God, it has not been used in a very long time.

Adisa's face is contorted with disbelief.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

They fill the pot with water, and then place wood underneath. The runaway is first severely whipped, and then tied inside the pot. Everyone is compelled to come down and witness the torture. A slow, low fire is lit under the bottom of the pot, and the water slowly brought to a boil, with the poor soul inside. He stands inside the pot, unable to move, and feels the water slowly getting hotter and hotter; prolonging the torture sometimes for hours. The poor bastard screams and screams for mercy - passing his urine and feces right there in the pot - it's a horrible experience, son. When the water begins to boil, that's when they take him out - his skin peeling off from his body. The weak ones are the lucky ones - they die even before the water begins to boil, but the stronger ones who survive - they suffer for days and days, having no use at all to themselves. That's the cruelest form of punishment I've ever seen. It's not a pretty sight, son - not a pretty sight - so take those thoughts about running away out of your head right now.

ADISA Cruel bastards!

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - LATE EVENING

Adisa and George sit under a tree, eating. Two SLAVE GIRLS, late teens, both good-looking, come walking by. One of them smiles at Adisa. Adisa turn around and stares after them.

GEORGE (nudges Adisa)
Let them go, son. (MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

All the pretty young ones are reserved for Massa and his backras. No black man touches any of these young girls unless Massa gives him permission to do so. You see them smiling with you - don't flirt with them - you'll only end up getting yourself in trouble.

ADISA

So what about Massa's wife - how does she deal with this?

GEORGE

It doesn't bother her - she knows that the girls are not a threat to her, they are just property. Furthermore, she knows that she is not able to give him the sexual pleasure that these black girls can give him - it takes pressure off her, so I guess it makes her happy.

ADISA

Son-of-a-bitch!

GEORGE

Take it easy, son. Ain't so use getting all riled up. That's the way life is around here. Those brown skin slaves - we call them Mulattoes - they're all Massa's offspring. They believe that they're better than us - but they're still property.

ADISA

If God really exists, shouldn't he be up there looking down on us - so why doesn't he do something?

GEORGE

I don't know, John - maybe it's
because of the curse.

ADISA

Curse? What curse?

GEORGE

The story is told of a great flood - one that destroyed the entire earth, thousands of years ago.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

God was angry at the wickedness of mankind, and decided that he would destroy all flesh from off the earth, except for one man and his family - eight persons. So he made them build a big boat, which they got into to be saved from the floodwaters. It rained for forty days and forty nights, and everyone on the earth drowned, except for those eight people. The man's name was Noah, and he had three sons -Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood was over and things were back to normal, one day Ham came into his father's tent, and saw him drunk and naked. Instead of treating his father with dignity, Ham mocked his father. It is said that Noah, upon realizing what Ham had done to him, put a curse on him - making him a slave forever to his brothers.

ADTSA

So what does that have to do with us?

GEORGE

It has been said that Ham was the father of the Negro race.

ADISA

Do you really believe that story, George?

GEORGE

To be totally honest with you, John, I really don't know what to believe.

ADISA

George, do you believe in destiny?

GEORGE

Maybe. Why?

ADISA

There is this girl - her name is Kamilah. We came over on the same ship, and we fell in love with each other. I have to find her. **GEORGE**

You're still in the land of fantasy, John. This is your destiny - accept it.

ADISA

No! I wont. I'm going to find this girl. I love her.

GEORGE

John, it's foolish to fall in love. I once had a wife, when I was on another plantation. She was a beautiful, strong, and loving African woman. We had three beautiful children together - two boys and a girl. One day the backra got up and decided that he was going to have me sold. We all pleaded with him - begged him not to separate us - even began kissing his boots - but he still did. That's over ten years ago - I haven't seen any of them since.

ADISA

How come you've never spoken about this before, George?

GEORGE

Some things are just too sad to talk about.

ADISA

George, I'm sorry, man.

GEORGE

Don't be sorry for me - my life is almost over. But you, John, you must not be stupid. Forget about love - you'll only get hurt.

FADE TO:

EXT. CANE FIELD - DAY

Black backs glisten in the morning sun, bent over, reaping sugar cane. Suddenly, loud SCREAMS echo from across the field. Adisa looks across. Jumbo is mercilessly whipping an elderly female. Adisa drops his cutlass, runs across the field.

ADISA

Leave her alone, you oversized gorilla! Touch her again, and I'll kill you - you ugly bastard!

JUMBO

What! What! Are you - are you --

Jumbo is at a loss for words, he's visibly stunned by Adisa's unexpected challenge.

ADISA

You heard me, Jumbo! I said, leave her alone!

JUMBO

Boy, you're one dead nigga!

ADISA

Try me, Jumbo!

Jumbo rushes at Adisa, but Adisa stands his ground, daring him. Jumbo stops in his tracks, keeps his distance. They eyeball each other. Adisa's muscular physique glistens in the morning sun, he's now almost as big as Jumbo. Jumbo glares at him, but makes no move to answer his defiant challenge.

JUMBO

Are you actually threatening me - threatening Jumbo?

ADISA

Call it what you want, but just leave that woman alone!

JUMBO

I'm going to git you for this - you black nigga bastard.

Everyone stops working and stares at the proceedings in disbelief.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

(addresses the slaves)
What are you staring at? Stupid idiots! Get back to work, all of you!

Jumbo now turns his attention to the onlookers. He rushes across the field and unleashes his wrath on them, as he lashes his whip at those close by. Adisa, smiling to himself, casually walks back to his position. Jumbo's ego is severely wounded, he jumps on his horse, brutally digs his spurs into the animal, and races back across to Adisa.

JUMBO (CONT'D)
 (screaming)

Tell your friends they can start digging your grave! You're dead! Do you hear me, boy? Dead! Dead! Dead!

Jumbo whacks the horse savagely and rides off at full gallop to the other side of the field, throwing his whip viciously at anyone within his reach.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

The door bursts open. Adisa jumps up out of his sleep. Jumbo and three others rush at him, snatch him out of bed, blindfold and gag him. They drag him out into the darkness.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NIGHT

They drag him through the bushes for some distance. Jumbo laughs all the way.

JUMBO

Fill the big pot, boys, we're gonna boil a nigga tonight.

VOICE (O.S.)

Big, bad African boy - Ashanti warrior - well, you're going to squeal like a pig tonight!

JUMBO

I'm going to teach you once and for all, boy, that no one messes with Jumbo and lives to talk about it.

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

Why don't we just hang the bastard, Jumbo?

JUMBO

No. I want to hear him squeal. Git the fire going.

Laughing raucously, they tie Adisa's arms together, throw the other end of the rope over a tree, and pull him up until his feet are suspended from off the ground. The punishment begins, as they turn him into a human punching bag. Taking turns, all three pound him mercilessly in the face and in the mid-section.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

That's enough. Don't want to kill him yet - save him for the big pot. Cut him down.

One of them cuts the rope. Adisa falls, slumps down to the ground, unable to bear his own weight. Jumbo stoops down over him.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

You're lucky, I'm not going to boil your black ass tonight, but I'm going to make your life a living hell. This is just the beginning. I'll teach you to mess with Jumbo.

They walk away, laughing among themselves.

Adisa lies still for a while, breathing heavily, grunting. Eventually mustering up the strength, he releases his hands from the rope. He removes the cloth from his eyes and the gag from his mouth. After several painful attempts, he staggers to his feet. He stumbles and crawls through the darkness until he comes up to a trough behind the slave houses. He buries his head in the water and washes away the blood from his face. Grunting all the way, he drags himself up to the door of his hut, then stumbles inside.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Adisa crawls on the floor, drags himself up onto his bunk, grunting as he does so. We hear muffled whispers among his roommates, but no one dares to offer him a helping hand.

EXT. CANE FIELD - DAY

Adisa's face is badly swollen. He stumbles out into the field behind the others, and comes face to face with Jumbo, who is waiting for him, sporting a satisfied, ugly grin.

Jumbo waves his whip threateningly at him.

JUMBO

Get to work, boy!

Adisa tries to haul himself across to his post, but Jumbo's whip comes at him, and finds its target on his back. Adisa goes down, grunting in excruciating pain. Jumbo hovers over him, screaming.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

On you feet at once, warrior boy! Show your friends just how tough you are now!

Adisa tries to get up, but all his strength is gone. Jumbo moves in for the kill, screaming.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

Git up! Git up, nigga!

Jumbo strikes him two more times, screaming at him at the top of his voice, challenging him to get up. Jumbo raises his whip to strike again. Adisa's face is in the dirt, helplessly awaiting the inevitable.

At that very moment, a horse comes up at full gallop. Bramwell's the rider, and he's not happy.

BRAMWELL

(shouts)

Stop! Stop! Stop this very minute!

Adisa raises up his head, stares gratefully at his guardian angel.

BRAMWELL (CONT'D)

You blasted idiot! What the hell do you think you doing? Why are you destroying my bloody property?

JUMBO

I-I-I am --I am not damaging him, Massa, sah. He-he-he was not carrying out my instruction, Massa. He was -- he was fooling around -slowing up the work, sah.

BRAMWELL

Give me that bloody whip!

Jumbo timidly hands over the whip to his master. Bramwell grabs it angrily out of his hand.

BRAMWELL (CONT'D)

You're going straight back to the boiling house! That's where you belong!

JUMBO

Yes, Massa.

BRAMWELL

(to Adisa)

And you! Get back to work at once!

Adisa painfully drags himself to his feet. He hobbles back to his post, picks up his cutlass and begins to chop sugar cane. He manages to smile through the pain.

We hear muffled mutters of satisfaction among the slaves. Some are even smiling, while others begin to sing, as they peep up from their labor, in disbelief, and see the mighty Jumbo being led away by his disgruntled master - like a dog on a leash - off to his new position in the boiling house.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

Adisa stands beside George and watches as he hitches a pair of horses to a cart.

GEORGE

I've been hearing some news that might interest you.

ADISA

What is it?

GEORGE

I don't know how much truth there is to it, but here is a rumor going around that some people are fighting real hard for the abolition of slavery.

ADISA

People trying to set us free? Are you serious, George? Who the hell are these people?

GEORGE

Don't get too excited, John - like I've said, its only a rumor. But it's been said that people in England are trying to set us free.

ADISA

England? White people?

GEORGE

Yes, a man by the name of William Wilberforce - he's working very hard for abolition -- I hear Massa cussing him everyday.

ADISA

You serious about this, George?

GEORGE

Don't get up your hopes up too high. Even if it's true, it might take many, many years before it becomes reality. These plantation owners aren't going to part freely with their profitable investment, just like that. One good thing though, I understand that the ships have stopped coming.

ADISA

Who told you that?

GEORGE

I hear Massa talking. It would seem that the ship that brought you here was the very last one to legally sail from Africa with human cargo. The government in England has made the trade illegal.

ADISA

What? Are you saying then, that I was a passenger on the last ship to bring Africans to this country?

GEORGE

Well, it would seem so.

FADE TO:

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

Adisa bends over a trough, washing himself, while the usual after work activities take place around him. Jumbo creeps up behind him. He hears him, spins around.

JUMBO

African swine, you'd better have eyes in the back of your head all the time. And you'd better start sleeping with both eyes open, because I'm going to get you for this -- if it's the last thing I do!

Come whenever you're ready, Jumbo -- but the question is; are you man enough to come alone?

JUMBO

Are you calling me a coward, boy?

ADISA

That's exactly what you are, Jumbo - one big, black, ugly, stupid, coward. It's only a coward who brings others to fight his battles for him.

JUMBO

You stinking, dirty, African swine! I'm going to kill you right now!

Jumbo ROARS and lunges at Adisa. Adisa agilely sidesteps to the left, this sends him crashing headlong into a pile of old barrels. The barrels scatter all across the ground.

Jumbo picks himself up, rebounds. SCREAMING like a madman, he comes charging at Adisa again. This time he connects, knocks Adisa down. Jumbo is upon him in a flash, with both hands around his throat. Adisa struggles hard to free himself. Can't. Jumbo has him pinned down real good. Jumbo squeezes hard, cutting off Adisa's air supply. Adisa struggles to dislodge Jumbo. Isn't having much success. Jumbo is prevailing.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

Look into my face, boy, 'cause it will be the last thing you'll see before you die!

Jumbo begins to celebrate victory. Huge mistake. The muscles in Adisa's arms and shoulders bugle. He creates a little room for himself, and rams his elbow hard into Jumbo's throat, dislodging him. Adisa jumps up to his feet - and so does Jumbo. The slaves form a ring around them. They cheer on Adisa.

JUMBO (CONT'D)

You stinking son-of-a-bitch!

Jumbo prepares to come in again. This time Adisa watches him carefully. Jumbo charges in and throws a wild punch. Adisa ducks under it, and responds with a superb right hand, which connects powerfully with Jumbo's mid section. It knocks the air out of him. Jumbo stumbles, doesn't go down. Adisa bears down upon him, fires a well executed combination of punches to Jumbo's face. The crowd roars.

Jumbo stands his ground momentarily, glaring at Adisa. Blood trickles down from the corner of his mouth. He grabs up a piece of plank, comes charging at Adisa, swinging wildly. Misses every time. Adisa responds with a solid combination of left and right power punches to Jumbo's body, knocks him clean to the ground this time. The roar from the crowd is thunderous. Adisa is instantly upon him, grabs him around his thick neck with both hands, proceeds to crush the life out of him. The fight is now gone out of Jumbo. He struggles in vain to free himself from Adisa's deadly grip.

George emerges out of the crowd, grabs Adisa by the shoulder.

GEORGE

That's enough, John.

Adisa ignores George, continues to crush the life out of Jumbo. The crowd screams wildly, driving him on for the kill.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(firmly)

I said that's enough, John. If you kill him, the backras will hang you for sure! Jumbo is not worth it. Let him go! Now!

Adisa slowly releases his grip on Jumbo's neck. He stands up to his feet and is greeted with a tumultuous applause. Jumbo staggers up to his feet and looks around at the crowd. He points a shaking finger at Adisa, who now has his back turned to him.

JUMBO

This - this - this is not the end of it!

Adisa ignores him and walks away.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - LATE EVENING

Adisa sits on a barrel and watches George as he slowly hobbles over to him. George is looking weak and tired.

ADISA

George, why don't you ask Massa to give you some easier tasks to do? You're looking real tired, man.

GEORGE

Don't worry about me, John. I'll soon be off to meet my maker. I don't have much time remaining here -- I'll soon be free.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

But you, my son, you're still a young man -- don't lose heart, because the day is coming soon, when you'll walk off backra's plantation -- free, strong and proud.

ADISA

Heard something new, George?

GEORGE

Something is blowing in the wind, I can feel it. These men in England -- Wilberforce, Buxton -- and others -- oh, yes, I hear Massa cussing them all the time.

ADISA

What's the latest?

GEORGE

They've formed an anti-slavery movement, and are strongly pressing for the freeing of all slaves. Massa is very worried. It will take some time, but it will happen one day. You just be strong.

ADISA

That sounds good, George.

GEORGE

But there's more. It's being rumored that king of England has already signed the proclamation for our freedom. Massa is very nervous. It is being rumored that the slaves are planning to revolt -- right across the island. The wind of change is blowing.

ADISA

That's great news, George.

GEORGE

But I won't be around to witness it, son. I'll be home with the Lord by then.

FADE TO:

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

Adisa washes off by the trough. Bramwell comes riding up behind him.

BRAMWETIT

John.

ADISA

Yes-yes, Massa?

BRAMWELL

Come with me.

Adisa, brow furrowed, drops everything he has in his hands and follows behind his master. Bramwell leads him over to a little one-room building, a short distance away from the slave huts.

BRAMWELL (CONT'D)

As of tonight, and for the next six nights, this is where you will stay.

Bramwell spins his horse around and rides off. Adisa stares after him, confounded. Adisa walks slowly up to the door.

INT. ROOM - LATE EVENING

Adisa looks around the room, confusion written all over his face. The room is relatively well furnished. There is bed in the corner, a table, and a two chairs. Adisa scratches his head, walks back out.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Adisa lies on the bed, stares up at the ceiling, befuddled. Someone softly pushes the door open. PEARL, seventeen, pretty, shapely, walks in. Adisa jumps up to his feet.

ADISA

What-what are you doing here, Pearl? Are-are you trying to get me into trouble?

Pearl just stands there staring at him, a blank look on her face.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Please leave at once.

PEARL

No-no. I can't. Ma-Massa sent me in here.

ADISA

What! Why?

PEARL

Don't you know?

ADISA

Know what?

PEARL

You are supposed to make me pregnant.

ADISA

What?

PEARL

Massa wants all of us girls to have babies. They say that the plantation is running out of slaves, because no more ships are coming across the seas.

ADISA

What! They want to breed us like animals!

Pearl begins to unbutton the front of her blouse. Adisa stares at her with wide-open unblinking eyes. She completely removes the top of her dress, revealing her beautiful chocolate colored skin, and her youthful, well shaped breasts.

ADISA (CONT'D)

PEARL

No! Stop! Stop!

What?

ADISA (CONT'D)

No! No! I -I can't do this! This isn't right!

PEARL

Are you for real? Massa will kill you.

ADISA

No. I can't make love to you. Why should I cause a child to be born -- to be a slave for the rest of his life? No. I ain't doing this -- I'd rather die first.

Pearl stares at him, her blouse hanging loosely around her waist.

ADISA (CONT'D)

I'm not taking anything away from you; you are beautiful and desirable -- but-but I can't do this thing. Please put your clothes back on, and leave.

PEARL

Are you crazy? I can't leave -- Massa would kill me! We have to do this for seven nights.

ADISA

Well, you can use the bed -- I'll sleep on the floor.

PEARL

If I'm not showing within the next few months, you will have to answer to Massa. You should do what he wants.

ADISA

Do you really want me to, Pearl? Do you want to bring a child into this world, and then watch him grow up, just like a dumb animal?

PEARL

Not necessarily, but maybe it could help my situation. If I make Massa happy, he might probably move me to work in the great house. That's the dream of every young girl on this plantation.

ADISA

And that's a very stupid dream. Whether you're in the white man's house, or in his fields, you are still his slave! You surprise me, Pearl, I thought you were more intelligent than that; look how beautiful you are.

PEARL

Massa would probably have you whipped if he heard you talking like that -- you'd better do what he tells you to do.

Massa is not God; he's still just a man!

PEARL

Suit yourself -- but don't say that I'd didn't warn you.

Pearl pulls her blouse back up, and climbs up on the bed. Adisa lies on the floor, and stares up into the ceiling.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

Adisa sits under a tree, watching the after work activity. Jumbo walks up to him.

JUMBO

I saw you and Pearl leaving the little house this morning.

ADISA

Mind your own filthy business, Jumbo!

JUMBO

You dirty, stinking, African swine!

ADISA

What do you have against Africans?

JUMBO

What do I have against Africans? I was born in this land. Now you come here getting all the privileges! Who do you think you are, anyway? You dirty, stinking, slave ship boy! You come over the sea on your stinking ship from Africa, and are now getting what belongs to me?

ADISA

Tough luck, Jumbo.

Adisa gets up and walks away. Jumbo glares after him.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Adisa sits on the floor carving a piece of wood. Pearl sits on the edge of the bed, staring down at him.

Pearl, I hope I haven't offended you.

PEARL

No, you haven't.

ADTSA

Nothing in the world would be more pleasing to me right now, than to take you in my arms and make love to you -- but it has to be because you want me to; not because backra orders it.

PEARL

I understand. I am really beginning to admire you very much. I thought about you all day today. I can't think of a single man on this plantation — black, white or Mulatto — who would share a room with me, and would not instantly jump into that bed with me. You're are different, John, and I admire that.

ADISA

I hate that name -- my name is Adisa.

PEARL

Adisa?

ADISA

Yes. It means: the one who will teach us. By the way, what's your name?

PEARL

Pearl.

ADISA

I mean your real name. You should have a lovely African name.

PEARL

Unfortunately, I don't have one -- I was born on the island.

ADISA

Don't worry, one of these days I'll get you one.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NIGHT

The moon is shining down in its full brilliance, and all the stars are out. There's not a single cloud in the sky. Adisa sits under a tree staring up into the heavens. Pearl comes walking across silently. She sits down beside him.

ADTSA

Hey, you almost frightened me, I didn't see you coming.

PEARL

What are you doing out here, looking up into the sky like that?

ADISA

I'm looking out for Orion. It should be up early tonight. One day I'll be free, just like the stars.

PEARL

You even study the stars too?

ADISA

I studied the stars when I was back home. I know most of the constellations; Orion is my favorite. Did you know that some of the pyramids of Egypt are fashioned after the Orion?

PEARL

No, I didn't know that. What is Africa like?

ADISA

Beautiful -- just plain beautiful.

PEARL

Everyday I see a new side of you, John.

ADISA

How many times must I tell you, girl -- my name is Adisa.

Suddenly, we hear loud SHRIEKS; they are coming from the direction of the female huts. Adisa and Pearl jump to their feet and stare across. They quickly identify the bulky form of Jumbo, stumbling across the grounds, running as fast as he can. A dozen or so angry females chase after him with all sorts of objects in their hands, screaming. Jumbo isn't a quick runner, so they quickly catch up with him.

They knock him down to the ground, and begin to rain down blows all over his body.

Within seconds, horses come galloping across the grounds. Bramwell and two of his overseers ride across to investigate. A FAT WOMAN runs up to them. Adisa pulls Pearl behind some nearby bushes. They stay out of sight and watch the proceedings.

BRAMWELL

What the hell's going on here?

FAT WOMAN

(points at Jumbo)

He tried to rape one of the girls, Massa.

MASSA

What? Who did he try to rape?

FAT WOMAN

Annie, sah.

BRAMWELL

(addresses Jumbo)

Get up! You stupid bastard! What have you done? This is absolutely the last straw! You ugly son-of-abitch! You've been nothing but trouble since you got on this plantation. Now I'm going to fix your bloody business once and for all!

BRAMWELL (CONT'D)

(to the women)

Get back inside, all of you!

The women scamper back into their respective huts. Jumbo crawls on the ground, he grabs at his master's boots, kisses them. He cries, begs for mercy.

BRAMWELL (CONT'D)

Take your hands off me, you filthy swine!

(shouting)

Tom! Joe! Get your black asses out here on the double!

Two slave drivers come rushing out of their huts.

MASSA

String him up, and whip his black ass -- both of you!

They string Jumbo up on a nearby tree. He howls and begs for mercy, but they fall on deaf ears, as Bramwell and his entourage sit on their horses and watch. Both men take turns in whipping Jumbo. The slaves peep out, as his howls echo across the open grounds. They whip him until his voice falls silent.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NEXT MORNING

The light of day reveals on of the most horrific sights - Jumbo's back is ripped to threads; he is swollen to almost twice his size. Dead. The slaves whisper among themselves as they walk out into the fields - many have satisfied smiles on their faces.

FADE TO BLACK.

FIVE MONTHS LATER

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

Adisa sits on a barrel, carving a piece of wood. Suddenly, A high-pitched WAIL echoes across the grounds. This is quickly followed by another - then another. He jumps up to his feet.

A dozen females in long black dresses emerge into view. They walk behind two young men, who carry away a dead body wrapped in white sheet. Adisa watches with interest as they head down to the slaves' burial ground. Adisa runs down to the burying ground ahead of them, where we see two YOUTHS digging a grave.

ADISA

Who is it?

YOUTH #1

George. Died in his sleep last night.

Adisa sighs - long and deep, then walks away slowly. He wipes away a tear from his eye with the back of his hand.

The women are now by the grave side. They begin to sing.

FEMALE VOICES (singing)

Before I'd be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord
And be saved.

Adisa watches the proceedings from a distance away. The women continue to sing, as the men place George's body down in the grave and cover with dirt. Adisa turns around and walks away, his eyes filled with tears.

EXT. OUTSIDE SLAVE HUTS - DAY

We see all the young females, gathered together in a group by themselves. Bramwell and his BOOKKEEPER walk around and inspect the girls. The bookkeeper makes entries in a large logbook. Adisa stands behind a tree and observes the proceedings. They now come up to Pearl.

BRAMWELL

What's the matter with you -- why aren't you showing like the others? Didn't I put you out for breeding?

PEARL

Massa-Massa, I-I-I -- well I --

BRAMWELL

What's the matter with your tongue, Girl? Come on, you little bitch! What's the matter with you. Are you barren? All the other girls are showing.

PEARL

Ma-Massa -- I-I don't -- I don't --

BRAMWELL

Are you dumb -- or are you stupid?

Adisa steps out from behind the hut and walks over to them.

ADISA

It's not her fault.

BRAMWELL

What! What did you say, boy?

ADISA

The name's Adisa. And like I've said -- it's not her fault. I didn't touch her! We're not animals!

Bramwell glares at Adisa, speechless with rage.

BRAMWETIT

You insolent swine!

Bramwell lunges at Adisa, strikes at him with his bare hand. Adisa deliberately ducks into the blow. We hear a dull cracking sound as Bramwell's hand comes in contact with the top of Adisa's skull. Bramwell YELPS in agony, as he prances around, wringing his hand.

BRAMWELL (CONT'D)

(to Adisa)

You stupid nigga bastard!
 (shouts to some men
 standing nearby)
String him up! String him up to the
tree at once!

The men rush into action. They grab Adisa, drag him over to a nearby tree, and tie him securely to the tree.

BRAMWELL (CONT'D)

Bring out the whip! Bring out the bloody whip at once!

Adisa looks across to Pearl. Fully cognizant of what's about to follow, she covers her face with both hands.

The bookkeeper, realizing what's about to happen, rushes across to Bramwell.

BOOKKEEPER

Mr. Bramwell, we can't afford to lose another one, sir. The estate is already running at a loss. Furthermore, this one the most valuable slave in your inventory.

BRAMWELL

So what the hell must I do with this insolent swine?

BOOKKEEPER

Sell the bloody bastard, sir. Smithson is buying.

BRAMWELL

Okay, take him away to Smithson first thing in the morning, but leave the bastard right where he is overnight!

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NIGHT

Pearl steals out of her hut, looks around carefully, then finds her way over to Adisa.

PEARL

Adisa?

ADISA

Pearl! What are you doing out here? Get back in before they see you.

PEARL

I-I had to see you, Adisa -- theythey're taking you away tomorrow. I-I won't see you again.

ADISA

I'll be back for you.

PEARL

Oh, Adisa, we both know that will be impossible.

ADISA

As long as I have breath, nothing is impossible.

PEARL

Oh, Adisa, Adisa! I'm going to miss you so much.

ADISA

I'll be back for you; don't you worry. Now get back inside, before they see you.

She grabs Adisa in her arms, kisses him, then scampers off into the darkness, sobbing softly.

EXT. SMITHSON PLANTATION GROUNDS - DAY

They pull in through a large iron gate. Adisa sits in the back of the cart, his hands bound behind his back. They travel through acres and acres of cane fields. Finally, they come up to a row of buildings.

The cart stops in front of the first building. The bookkeeper, and the two white workers who accompany him, jump down from off the cart.

BRUCE, mid-twenties, comes out of one of the buildings to meet them.

BOOKKEEPER

Morning Bruce. I have a fine one here for you.

(MORE)

BOOKKEEPER (CONT'D)

(to Adisa)

Stand up, boy.

Adisa complies, Bruce comes around and examines him briefly.

BRUCE

Not looking bad. How much?

BOOKKEEPER

Let us go inside and talk.

BRUCE

Okay.

The bookkeeper follows Bruce inside the building. They come back out moments later.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Uriah! Come and take this new boy out into the field!

URIAH, mid-thirties, runs out right away; he is short, stockily built, light brown complexion. He cuts Adisa loose and hustles him down from the cart.

URIAH

Come on, move it, boy.

Uriah drags Adisa out into the cane field to join the others.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

Adisa casually strolls around, familiarizing himself with his new surroundings. As he steps onto a narrow pathway that leads through some bushes, he sees a young fellow walking up the path towards him. Adisa steps aside, making room for him to pass, as he comes abreast of him. Adisa eyes pops wide open. He stares into the fellow's face in disbelief.

ADTSA

Dan-Dan-Danso? Danso!

DANSO, eighteen, muscular, stops in his tracks. He stares back at Adisa. His mouth drops open in disbelief.

DANSO

Adisa! Adisa!

They make a mighty rush into each other's arms, embrace with all their might.

DANSO

Danso! Danso! I just knew What-what --how -- what-what that you had to be alive! what are you doing here?

ADISA

I was brought here this morning Isis this really, really you, my brother?

DANSO

I-I thought you were -- I thought you were -- I mean, I thought you didn't make it, man!

They finally release each other, but stand and stare at each other from head to foot.

ADISA

We are survivors, man. Ashanti warriors. Where are the others?

DANSO

They're supposed to be alive. Except for Papa, we all made it across safely.

ADISA

So where are they now?

DANSO

I don't know, man. Can't let them see us talking -- meet me down by that big cotton tree over yonder tonight.

ADISA

Yes. Sure.

They touch fists and walk away in opposite directions.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - LATE NIGHT

Apart from the lights that come from the great house windows in the distance, the estate is in complete darkness. Adisa and Danso sit under a huge cotton tree, their white teeth glisten in the darkness. A bright asteroid shoots swiftly across the sky.

DANSO

(points up to the heavens) Did you see that, Adisa?

Yes. Beautiful. This is nothing short of a miracle -- us being together again. Now, we can move mountains, little brother.

DANSO

Yes, God's been looking out for us.

ADISA

You've grown into a man; you're just as big and as strong as I am.

DANSO

So how did you get here?

ADISA

I was sold because I refused to allow myself to be used as a stud.

DANSO

A stud?

ADISA

Yes, they put me in a room with this girl, for one entire week.

DANSO

So what happened? Didn't you - didn't you -- I mean --

ADISA

No. I didn't lay a hand on her.

DANSO

So what did the girl look like -- I mean -- was she pretty?

ADISA

Prettiest little thing on the entire estate. Her name is Pearl. I'm going back for her someday. But what about Abena, Kamau, and Adana? Do you know where are they now?

DANSO

Well, they all made it off the ship alive -- that's about as much as I know. As to where they are today, I haven't got the slightest idea.

ADISA

We <u>must</u> find them, Danso. We must find the three of them.

DANSO

That's not possible. No one ever escapes from --

ADISA

Nothing is impossible! We're getting out of here, little brother.

DANSO

There is absolutely no way out of here. They-they'll track us down and kill us like dogs. I've seen what they've done to all who have tried to escape.

ADISA

Where is your warrior spirit, Danso? Have they softened you up, man? Danso, we're not slaves! We are Ashanti people, and we are fighters! Never forget that!

DANSO

But if we even manage to escape, we still haven't got the slightest idea where they are.

ADISA

Didn't I find you?

DANSO

Well, yes -- but --

ADISA

This is just a little island, not a continent. We are going to find our sisters and our brother.

DANSO

I guess you're right, Adisa, we do have a responsibility to find our siblings.

ADISA

That's the spirit, little brother. That's the spirit. Let's meet here again tomorrow night.

They embrace each other and quietly disappear into the darkness.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - LATE NIGHT

Adisa and Danso emerge out of the darkness, quickly make their way over to the huge cotton tree. They sit down, but before either of them can utter a word, a group of men led by Uriah, burst out of the darkness upon them, shouting loudly.

URIAH

What are you two doing here every night? Planning a slave rebellion?

The men quickly overpower the brothers. They grab them, bind them with ropes, and drag them through the bushes, making quite an uproar in the process.

URIAH (CONT'D)

(addressing Adisa)
You're just here and you're
breaking the curfew already?
 (to the men)

Tie them to the whipping post, tomorrow morning we'll deal with them.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NEXT MORNING

The sun makes its way up from behind the mountain range. The slaves make their way out into the fields. Adisa and Danso are tied to two thick upright posts in the middle of the yard. The WHIP-MAN, late-thirties, grotesque looking, stands in front of the brothers with a long black whip in his hand. He jumps around - warning up, flexing his muscle. Uriah comes out and stands beside him.

URIAH

Begin.

WHIP-MAN

My pleasure.

We hear a horse galloping up. MRS. SMITHSON, mid thirties, white, beautiful, comes charging up, riding a white horse.

MRS. SMITHSON

What the hell's going on here? What are you doing.

URIAH

These two were caught out after curfew last night, Mrs. Smithson.

MRS. SMITHSON

Let them loose at once!

URIAH

But-but, Mrs. Smithson, it's plantation policy to --

MRS. SMITHSON

To hell with plantation policy! I said, let them loose.

URIAH

Well, if you say so, Missis -- you're the boss.

Adisa and Danso stare at each other in disbelief. Uriah cuts them down from the whipping posts, and they fall to the ground.

Mrs. Smithson sits on her horse and stares down on them momentarily. Adisa struggles to his feet, makes eye contact with her. She turns the horse around and rides off.

DANSO

Seems like God has been on our side once again.

ADISA

That's why I will always believe in destiny, Danso.

URIAH

Shut up and get to work!

They walk out into the field, smiling.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NEXT MORNING

Adisa is on his way out into the fields, along with the others. Mrs. Smithson comes riding up.

MRS. SMITHSON

(points whip at Adisa)

You! Come here.

Adisa walks across to her.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Come with me.

Adisa walks behind her, all the way up to the great house. Mrs. Smithson dismounts, hitches her horse, removes her riding gloves, and walks over to him.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

What's your name?

John.

MRS. SMITHSON

Well, John, I have a new assignment for you.

Adisa stares at her, admiring her beauty.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

What are you staring at?

ADISA

No-Nothing, Missis.

MRS. SMITHSON

Come with me.

Adisa follows her through a well-manicured lawn, and across to a large flowers garden, close to the front of the house.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

I want you to tend this garden.

ADISA

Yes, Missis. Should I take care of the lawn also?

MRS. SMITHSON

No, just the garden for now.

She turns around and walks away towards the great house. Adisa stares after her, a puzzled look on his face.

Adisa walks over to a nearby shed and picks out the necessary tools. He cuts off a couple of dried leaves and some faded flowers.

From a room on the second floor of the great house, we see Mrs. Smithson staring down at Adisa from behind the curtains.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NEXT MORNING

Mrs. Smithson emerges from the great house. She heads for the flowers garden. She finds Adisa on his knees, weeding.

MRS. SMITHSON

Come with me, John.

Adisa jumps up, drops the cutlass, and walks behind her. She heads towards the great house, and walks quickly up the steps. Adisa hesitates at the bottom of the steps.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Come on, John.

Completely confounded, Adisa walks up the steps and follows behind her awkwardly, in though the front door.

INT. GREAT HOUSE - DAY

It's sparkling clean inside. Adisa stares around in awe at the lavish and exquisite furnishings. With a tattered shirt on his back, and no shoes on his feet, Adisa definitely seems out of place as he follows her through the house.

A young colored GIRL, and an elderly WOMAN, who are dusting in the hallway, deliberately stop what they are doing to glare at him in disgust, displaying the utmost contempt. Adisa ignores them. He follows Mrs. Smithson into a large room that is right next to the kitchen area. We hear the clatter of dishes.

MRS. SMITHSON

Sit down, John.

Adisa nervously takes his seat around a large, rough looking wooden table, which is in the center of the room.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Adassa!

VOICE OF WOMAN (O.S.)

Yes, Missis.

MRS. SMITHSON

Bring some food out here.

VOICE OF WOMAN (O.S.)

Yes, Missis.

Mrs. Smithson turns around and walks out of the room. ADASSA, fifty, overweight, jet black, emerges from the kitchen with a large dish filled with food him her hands. She grunts like a hog, throws the dish down in front of Adisa, and stares down on him with contempt.

ADISA

(under his breath) Silly old house slave.

ADASSA

What did you say, boy?

Adisa smiles to himself but does not answer. She walks away, muttering and cursing, as Adisa gets down into the meal and begins to clean the dish.

ADISA

Old bitch sure knows how to cook.

EXT. FLOWERS GARDEN - DAY

Adisa walks around in the garden, pretending to be doing something - there's basically not much to do here. We hear footsteps coming up. Adisa turns around, he sees Mrs. Smithson walking up to him.

MRS. SMITHSON

How are you enjoying your new job?

ADISA

It's okay, Missis.

MRS. SMITHSON

Good. I'm glad you like what you are doing.

Mrs. Smithson stands and stares at him from head to foot.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Come with me, John.

Adisa places down the tools, wipes the sweat away from his face with the back of his hand, follows behind her up the great house steps, and in through the front door.

INT. GREAT HOUSE - DAY

Adisa walks behind her through the living room and then up to a magnificent mahogany staircase. Adisa pauses at the bottom of the staircase.

MRS. SMITHSON

Come on up, John.

Adisa scuttles up and joins her at the top of the staircase. She pushes open a well-polished mahogany door, enters, and urges him in.

INSIDE BEDROOM

Adisa walks in nervously. The room is large, and elaborately furnished. Mrs. Smithson pushes up the door, stands with her back to the door, and stares at Adisa.

In the center of the room, stands a magnificent four-poster bed, with a beautiful hand carved mahogany headboard. The bed is surrounded by several pieces of exquisite furnishings.

MRS. SMITHSON

Surely, you aren't afraid of me, John?

Adisa is dumbfounded, he just stands there staring at her, with a frightened look on his face.

Smiling, she walks over to a small table in the corner of the room and picks out a bottle of rum from among several other bottles that she has lined up there. She pours herself a drink, adds water, swallows in one shot.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Want a drink?

Adisa shakes his head. He doesn't need a drink; he needs to get the hell out of there!

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Don't drink, eh?

She pours out another drink, disposes of it as quickly as she did the first one.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

This is my best friend. Sure you don't need a drink?

Adisa shakes his head once again. She pours out another drink, but places the glass down on the table, and waltzes over to him.

She stares at him for a brief moment, then begins to unbutton his shirt. Adisa stands rigidly against the wall, and watches her, as she begins to rub her delicate hands across his chest. Adisa is gripped by fear, he begins to tremble, a wild look in his eyes.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Hmm -- so muscular -- so strong.

She continues to caress his chest, then presses up her slender body against his. She backs away a bit and unbuttons the front of her dress. Adisa's eyes bulge out of his head, as she shakes her dress to the floor, and stands before him only her underwear. Her milky white skin glistens in the morning sunlight that comes in through a gap in the window curtain. She takes his hand in hers and places it on her breasts. She then pushes him backwards onto the large bed, and climbs up on top of him.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D) (breathless)

Make love to me, John. Take me, John.

Adisa doesn't take up the challenge, he just lies there trembling.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D) What's the matter, John? Haven't you had a woman before?

ADISA

(looking around wildly)
Where-where is Massa? If-ifif he catches here, he-he-he'll
kill me for sure!

She lets out a drunken, crazy shriek of laughter.

MRS. SMITHSON

Don't worry about him. He's somewhere out there busy banging away at his concubine slaves girls. He doesn't care what I do.

Without saying another word, Adisa rolls her over, gets on top of her, and begins to make love to her. She quickly begins to scream and moan loudly. This frightens Adisa, he places his hand over her mouth, trying to smother the sounds, but its no use, she just continues.

CUT TO:

IN THE HALLWAY

Mrs. Smithson's loud noises reaches out into the hallway, where Adassa is dusting furniture. Adassa stops what she is doing and tiptoes across to Mrs. Smithson's bedroom door. She places her ears close to the door and listens, a mischievous look on her face.

BACK TO:

BEDROOM

The act is now over, but Mrs. Smithson continues to cling to Adisa tightly with her both arms around his neck, breathing heavily. Adisa pushes her way gently, but respectfully, and climbs quickly out of the bed. He needs to get the hell out of here right away.

MRS. SMITHSON

John, oh, John -- that was so heavenly -- that was really great. Where did you learn to make love like that -- in Africa? My adulterous husband has never made me feel like this before.

ADISA

Can-can I go now, Missis?

She doesn't respond, but gets up from the bed and slowly puts her clothes back on. She walks over to the dresser, takes a seat on the stool, stares at herself in the mirror. With a satisfied smile on her face, she perfumes herself, brushes her tall brown hair, and puts on a pair of golden earrings. She turns around to Adisa, smiling beautifully.

MRS. SMITHSON

This will be our little secret, John. We'll be doing this again soon. Now, get back to the garden.

She walks over to the door and opens it. Adisa scuttles out.

HALLWAY

Adisa steps out into the hallway and comes face to face with Adassa. She gawks at him in absolute disbelief, her mouth gaping wide open.

ADASSA

You! Lawd have mercy! What-what-are you doing -- come-coming out of Misses' bedroom?

ADISA

Mind your own damn business!

Adisa brushes past her, runs down the staircase quickly, and out of the house. Adassa just stand there staring after him - her sweaty jowls sagging, and her mouth wide open.

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

We hear loud moaning. Adisa and Mrs. Smithson are under the sheet, making love. The act eventually concludes. Adisa jumps up, pulls on his clothes quickly.

MRS. SMITHSON What's the big rush, John?

Mrs. Smithson gets out of the bed, drags on her dress, walks across the room, and picks up a parcel. She walks back across and places it in Adisa's hands.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D) Here, take this. I want you to stop wearing those filthy slave clothes.

ADISA

Thanks, Missis.

FADE TO:

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adisa and Mrs. Smithson are wrapped in each other's arms under the sheet. Adisa now appears a bit more relaxed.

MRS. SMITHSON

I'm going to move you out of the slave houses. There's a little room behind the great house -- I want you to move into it.

ADISA

I don't think that would be a very good idea.

MRS. SMITHSON

I make the decisions -- not you.

ADISA

Okay, Missis.

MRS. SMITHSON

And stop calling me Missis -- well, at last when we're alone together. My name is Claire.

ADISA

Okay, Claire -- no problem. No problem at all.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - DAY

Adisa and Danso walk up to each other. They embrace.

DANSO

What's going on Adisa? I hardly ever see you. I hear that you've moved in with the house slaves. Is that true?

Yes.

DANSO

And you're even dressing like them now. What's going on, brother? You used to talk so much against house slaves. What have they done to you, man?

ADISA

It's all about Strategy, man.

DANSO

Strategy? What the hell are you talking about?

ADISA

I'm working on a plan, a plan that could get us our freedom -- well, that is if I play the game right.

DANSO

Game? Stop talking in parables, man! What kind of a game?

ADISA

A very crazy one.

DANSO

So, who are you playing this game with?

ADISA

Massa's wife.

DANSO

Massa's wife? I don't get it! What does Massa's wife have to do with you?

ADISA

Quite a lot, little brother. Quite a lot.

DANSO

You're not making any sense, Adisa. You're stink of rum! Are you drunk, man?

ADISA

No, I'm not drunk.

DANSO

Come on, man, stop keeping me in suspense. How exactly does this white woman fall into your game?

ADISA

She brings me up into her room almost every day.

DANSO

You! In Massa's bedroom! In the great house! For what?

ADISA

Why would a woman bring a man in her bedroom --just to admire his good looks?

DANSO

Adisa, are you trying to tell me that you are -- that you are sleeping with this white woman -- your master's wife?

ADISA

Now you're getting the picture.

DANSO

You've gone completely insane, Adisa! You been drinking to much rum, man! Do you have any idea what they'll do to you if you're caught?

ADISA

That's a chance I'll have to take. This is my chance for freedom. She's been promising me the money to buy my freedom.

DANSO

Suppose you were to get this woman pregnant -- do you have the slightest idea what they would do to you? You are playing with fire, Adisa!

ADISA

Well, that's one thing I don't have to worry about. She claims that her womb is barren -- that's why her husband despises her. DANSO

Adisa, Papa always told us to leave other men's wife alone.

ADISA

This woman is not just other another man's wife, Danso. This is the chief oppressor's woman we're talking about, and my ticket to freedom.

DANSO

This is too dangerous; I'm worried about you, Adisa.

ADTSA

I can take care of myself. See you around, little brother.

They embrace and walk away in opposite directions.

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adisa sits on the side of the bed. Mrs. Smithson walks over to the liquor table, pours herself a drink.

MRS. SMITHSON

I want you to spend the entire day with me today.

ADISA

No, no, I-I can't -- I-I have work to do.

MRS. SMITHSON

Mrs. Smithson laughs out aloud.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D) What's the matter, John? I'm giving you one complete day out of the sun, and you're protesting. Why?

ADISA

I'm thinking about your husband. I see him come to the house for lunch everyday.

MRS. SMITHSON

I told you not to worry about him. Didn't I?

Well, yes, Claire, but --

MRS. SMITHSON

But nothing! So stop worrying about my so called husband.

ADTSA

But how can I not worry? If Massa ever finds out about us, I'm doomed.

MRS. SMITHSON

No, he won't. We don't share the same bed anymore, so he has no business in this room. He prefers his young slave girls. He treats me with contempt because I can't give him children -- I can't provide him with a heir. I don't tell him who to sleep with, and neither can he tell me what to do. We are two free people. Understand?

ADISA

Well, if you say so.

FADE TO:

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mrs. Smithson is sits in a chair reading the newspaper. Adisa walks over by the liquor table, begins to pour out a drink of rum.

ADISA

Need a drink, Claire.

MRS. SMITHSON

Yes, please.

Adisa is about to pour out the drink, when suddenly, there is a loud banging on the door.

ANGRY VOICE (O.S.)

Claire! Claire! Open the bloody door before I kick it in!

Adisa bolts into the clothes closet!

MRS. SMITHSON

What do you want, Michael Smithson?

SMITHSON continues to beat violently on the door.

SMITHSON (O.S.)

What the hell do you think you are doing, woman? Open this very minute, before I kick the bloody door down!

MRS. SMITHSON

Hold your horses, Michael -- I'm coming, I'm coming.

Mrs. Smithson walks across and opens the door. Smithson barges in, and he's in a mad rage! We see Smithson for the first time, he is middle-aged, rough-looking, balding, and overweight - an absolute mismatch for his beautiful wife.

SMITHSON

What on earth do you think you are doing, woman?

MRS. SMITHSON

I haven't got the slightest idea what you're making all this racket about.

SMITHSON

Shut up, you stupid bitch! Are you trying to take me for a fool?

MRS. SMITHSON

Calm down yourself, Michael.

SMITHSON

Why are you doing this to me, Claire?

MRS. SMITHSON

What are you talking about, Michael?

SMITHSON

You know damn well what I'm talking about Woman! You trying to play games with me!

INTERCUT: BEDROOM/CLOSET

CLOSET

Adisa is terrified, he is trembling life a leaf. His eyes pop out of his head in stark terror. This has got to be it; he's dead meat.

He huddles himself more securely behind the tightly packed dresses, just in case Smithson decides to take a peek inside.

BEDROOM

Smithson blows hard, furious. He rushes across the room as if his's going to whack her, but thinks about it, withdraws.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

I went to the bank this morning and discovered that there was a large withdrawal from the trust account! What have you done with my bloody money? You blasted thieving half drunk bitch! I'm going to kill you!

CLOSET

Adisa looks up to the heavens, breathes a long, deep, sigh of relief.

BEDROOM

MRS. SMITHSON

Don't you know that my mother is sick in England? I had to send money up to pay the medical bills.

SMITHSON

With my money!

MRS. SMITHSON

I have a right to that money also, Michael. I'm still your wife.

SMITHSON

Not any more, I'm cutting you off! As of today you'll have no more access to my money -- not one red penny! Drunken, barren bitch!

MRS. SMITHSON

I think you're going to have to speak to my lawyer about that. I'm entitled to half of this estate.

SMITHSON

We will bloody well see about that!

Smithson rams his fist hard into the wall, then barges out of the room, cussing loudly, all the way down the staircase. Adisa gives Smithson time to disappear, then crawls out of the closet and slips past Mrs. Smithson without saying a word, or even looking at her. He opens the door slowly, peeps out carefully, and then bolts out of the room.

FADE TO:

SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - DAY

It's raining heavily. Adisa stands under a shed, sheltering from the rain, close to the flowers garden. He sees a cart coming up the driveway in the rain, some distance away. The cart is being driven by Uriah. There are four newly acquired slaves in the back of the cart. Although their features are not clearly visible, he can ascertain that there are three males and one female. The rain eventually subsides. Adisa walks back into the flowers garden.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

The sun slowly sets behind the distant mountain range. Work is over for the day, and the slaves are busy attending to their after work chores. We see Adisa as he emerges into view, walking down the path that leads to the slave quarters. He comes up to a young female, sitting all by herself under a tree. She hears his footsteps, turns around, looks up. It's Pearl!

ADISA PEARL

Pearl! What-what -- Adisa! Adisa! Oh, my God!

Pearl jumps up to her feet and springs into Adisa's arms.

ADISA

What-what -- when -- did-did you --

PEARL

This morning, Adisa! - This morning! Oh, God! I don't believe it!

ADISA

What-What are you doing here?

PEARL

Bramwell's plantation went broke -- they had to sell all the slaves to pay their debts.

Adisa looks around nervously, gently eases her out of his arms.

ADISA

I just, just don't believe this!

PEARL

I-I thought I'd never see you again
in my entire life.

ADISA

That's why I'll always believe in destiny.

PEARL

Oh, Adisa, oh, Adisa. Since that morning you left the plantation, my life has been nothing but misery. Every single might I would lie in my bed and think about you -- just wondering -- just wondering if I'd ever see you again. I couldn't believe my eyes when I looked up and saw you -- it's-it's as if I'm still in a dream.

ADISA

This is no dream, girl, this is real. It seems that God has determined that our paths should cross again. I've also located one of my brothers on this plantation. We will soon be moving mountains.

PEARL

That's great Adisa! Oh, Adisa, I still can't believe it.

She jumps into his arms once again and clings to him tightly. Adisa tries to ease her off gently, but she just clings to him.

He looks up, and to his absolute horror, locks eyes with Mrs. Smithson. She just sits there on her white horse, glaring at them. She then strikes the horse angrily, and gallops away.

ADISA

I-I have-have to go now, Pearl.

PEARL

(staring after the woman) Who-who's that woman?

She-she-she is the owner's wife.

PEARL

Massa's wife? So-so why was she staring at you like that?

ADISA

I don't know. Have to go now, Pearl. Every little thing is gonna be alright -- soon. I love you.

PEARL

Love you too, Adisa.

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adisa pushes the door, slithers in. Mrs. Smithson is in the bed, lying under the covers.

ADISA

Why did you send for me at this time of the night -- what's so urgent?

MRS. SMITHSON

Pour yourself a drink.

Looking very uneasy, Adisa walks over to the liquor table and pours himself a tall drink of rum.

ADISA

What's so urgent Claire? You know that I don't like coming to the great house at nights.

MRS. SMITHSON

Tell me, John, do you still find me attractive?

ADISA

Of-of course I do. What-what's the matter, Claire?

MRS. SMITHSON

Who's that slave girl I saw you with this evening?

ADISA

Oh, She. She-she's just a friend. We-we used to be on the same plantation some time ago.

MRS. SMITHSON

Oh, I see. An old girlfriend.

ADISA

She's just a friend, Claire.

MRS. SMITHSON

She's pretty.

ADISA

I-I guess she is.

MRS. SMITHSON

Well, when you see her again, let her know that she won't remain pretty for too long if she tries to come between us.

ADTSA

What are you talking about Claire? I've already told you -- she's just a friend.

MRS. SMITHSON

You heard me, John. Now get out! Get out!

Adisa quickly slips out.

EXT. FEMALE SLAVE QUARTERS - EARLY NEXT MORNING

We see Pearl among a group of women who are busy preparing themselves to begin the day's chores. We hear the hoof beats of a horse coming up. Mrs. Smithson comes riding up on her white horse. She stops, points her whip at Pearl.

MRS. SMITHSON

You! Come here!

The other females look up at Mrs. Smithson, apparently not certain exactly who she is actually making reference to.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

(screams at the women)
What the hell are you staring at?
Off to work, all of you!

Pearl walks up nervously to Mrs. Smithson. She has a questioning look on her face.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

What's your name?

PEARL

Pearl, Missis.

MRS. SMITHSON

Pearl. That's your name, eh? Well, let me tell you something, little Miss Darkie, you certainly are no pearl on this plantation. You're just a little, black slave bitch! That's what you are! Understand!

PEARL

What? I-I --

MRS. SMITHSON

Stay away from John! Do you hear me bitch! This is just a warning!

Mrs. Smithson whacks the horse viciously, and gallops away, leaving a bamboozled Pearl staring after her.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

Adisa and Pearl are standing in the middle of a clump of thick bushes, out of sight, a fair distance away from the slave quarters.

ADISA

This will be our secret meeting place. We can't be seen together.

Pearl seems uneasy - she is constantly staring looking over her shoulder.

ADISA (CONT'D)

What's the matter with you, Pearl?

PEARL

What's that white woman to you, Adisa?

ADTSA

White-white woman? What white woman?

PEARL

Why are you playing games with me, Adisa? I'm talking about the woman I saw glaring at you yesterday — the one who you claimed is the owner's wife.

ADISA

(forcing a laugh)

Oh, she. Well-well, I'm the person who tends her flowers garden -- the one up by the front of the great house.

PEARL

Are you sure that's all you're attending to? Why would they allow a strong man like you to be tending flowers.

ADISA

What-what are you implying, Pearl? Why-why would you say something like that?

PEARL

Because I had a visit from that white backra bitch this morning! She warned me to leave you alone! Are you having sex with this woman, Adisa?

ADISA

Well -- I-I -- well-- I-I can explain.

PEARL

How could you have the nerve to tell me that you love me, when you've been sleeping around with this white woman? Why are you lying to me?

ADISA

I wasn't lying -- I meant every word I said. I do love you. Listen, Pearl, this woman means absolutely nothing to me, but I need her right now. It's kinda complicated -- I'm working on a plan -- one day you'll understand.

PEARL

A plan?

ADISA

You have to go now, Pearl.

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adisa takes the last sip of rum from the glass and places it down on the table. He walks over to Mrs. Smithson, who is sitting on the bed. He places his arm around her shoulders, and sits down beside her.

ADISA

Claire, remember, you promised me the money to purchase my freedom.

MRS. SMITHSON

I know, John, but the problem is that I no longer have free access to my husband's funds. We have to go to court to have it settled. It could take some time.

She walks over to the closet and comes back out with a little stash of bank notes in her hand.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)
This is one hundred and twenty
pounds, put it away carefully. I'll
get some more to you as soon as I
can get my hands on it.

Adisa takes the money from her hands, looks at notes, smiles, and place them in his pocket. He then embraces her tightly.

ADISA

Thanks. Thanks, Claire.

MRS. SMITHSON

Go and put that money carefully away.

ADISA

There's one more thing I want you to do for me, Claire.

MRS. SMITHSON

What is it, John?

ADISA

I want you to teach me how to read and write your language.

MRS. SMITHSON

What?

ADISA

You heard me.

MRS. SMITHSON

Why?

ADISA

How will I function in the free world if I'm illiterate?

MRS. SMITHSON

All right, John, I'll start teaching you tomorrow. You're really something else -- do you know that?

ADISA

Yeah, I guess I'm a little more your average nigga.

MRS. SMITHSON

You sure are.

FADE TO:

THREE MONTHS LATER

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adisa sits on the floor with a book in his hand.

ADISA

This one was very easy. I need something more difficult.

MRS. SMITHSON

You're a quick learner.

ADISA

I have a good teacher.

Mrs. Smith walks over to the bookshelf, select two books, and comes back over with them.

MRS. SMITHSON

Here, take these two books with you. Read them from cover to cover. If you can do so, then you can consider yourself fully literate.

Adisa takes the books out of her hands and looks at them. The books are: MACBETH and JULIUS CAESAR - both written by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

ADISA

Thanks, Claire.

FADE TO:

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adisa pushes the door open and walks in.

ADISA

What's so urgent, Clair, that couldn't wait until the morning? You know I don't like coming here at --

MRS. SMITHSON

I'm pregnant, John.

Adisa stops in his tracks, his eyes pop wide open.

ADISA

What! Preg- preg- pregnant? You!

MRS. SMITHSON

That's what I said, John.

ADISA

Pregnant? For-for who?

MRS. SMITHSON

Now, what kind of a question is that, John?

Adisa hauls himself over to the nearest chair and slumps himself down in it.

ADISA

But-but-but you said that you-you-you couldn't have children.

MRS. SMITHSON

That's what my husband claimed.
Apparently, the fault was with him.

Mrs. Smithson walks over to the liquor table, pours out a drink of rum, and swallows it quickly.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Help yourself.

Adisa shakes his head and just sits staring into space as if in a daze.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Imagine, I'll be a history maker — the first white woman ever, on this island, to give birth to a mulatto child!

She laughs crazily, pours out another drink, downs it quickly, and then fixes another one.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

John, I'm all of five months pregnant. Why did you do this to me?

ADISA

Five-five months?

Another shriek of crazy laughter, as she staggers around the room, spilling liquor all over the floor.

ADISA (CONT'D)

I'm a dead man; they're gonna hang me for sure.

MRS. SMITHSON

Nah, I won't let that happen to you. It was all my fault.

ADISA

You have no control over what they're going to do to me, Claire.

MRS. SMITHSON

I do. Trust me on this one.

ADISA

You're looking at a dead man.

She staggers back across to the liquor table, pours out another drink. She's now laughing and crying at the same time.

MRS. SMITHSON

I guess that's how the cookie crumbles, Johnny Boy. Can't say we didn't have a grand time though. Can we? Come, have a drink. Drink your troubles away.

Mrs. Smithson emits another bout of drunken, gurgled laughter. Adisa stares at her in disgust.

ADISA

I-I-I have to leave now.

Adisa gets up out of the chair and begins to head for the door.

MRS. SMITHSON

No. Wait.

She walks over to the closet and comes back with a large leather purse in her hands.

MRS. SMITHSON (CONT'D)

I want you to have this.

She places the purse in his hands. Adisa opens the purse and looks into it. He lifts up his head, stares at her in astonishment. The purse is loaded with an assortment of expensive jewelry.

ADISA

These-these are your jewelry.

MRS. SMITHSON

I know what they are! Just take them and go.

ADISA

Thanks-thanks, Claire.

Adisa stares into her eyes for a few brief moments. He then places the purse inside his shirt, slowly creeps out of the room, and pulls up the door behind him.

EXT. IN THE BUSHES - NIGHT

The moon shines down brightly, as Adisa makes his way through the bushes, and up to the top of a hill. He carefully selects a spot, then quickly digs a hole with his cutlass. He takes the bank notes out of his pocket and forces them into the leather purse containing the jewelry. He then wraps the leather purse in some old clothes, stuffs it into the hole, and covers it with dirt. He marks the location with three large stones, which he places in a triangular formation around where the stash is buried. He scuttles back down the hill, and through the bushes.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - NEXT EVENING

It's the end of the workday, the slaves come marching in from off the fields. Adisa comes walking down the narrow path, on his way to the slave quarters.

Suddenly, a loud piercing SHRIEK resounds across plantation grounds. Instantly, everyone begins to run towards the direction of the great house, shouting, and making quite a commotion.

A large crowd is now gathered, forming a circle around an object on the ground. Through gaps in the crowd, we see Mrs. Smithson's body on the ground - crumbled and disfigured, with blood slowly oozing out of her nostrils and her mouth. Her eyes are wide open, staring blankly up into the heavens.

Adisa runs up, joins the crowd, stares down on his lover in disbelief.

Mr. Smithson, along with two others on horseback, come charging unto the scene at full gallop. Adassa, the house slave from the kitchen, rushes across to meet them.

SMITHSON

What the hell's going on here?

ADASSA

It's Missis, sah.

SMITHSON

What about her?

ADASSA

She jumped out of her window, sah! She's dead!

SMITHSON

Out of the way, all of you!

The crowd parts and allows Smithson through. He rides up, and looks down on his dead wife with contempt in his eyes.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Stupid drunk! Remove her body at once, before the news spreads over the entire parish! Take it to the barn!

Two youths jump out of the crowd and lift Mrs. Smithson's lifeless body from off the ground. They carry it off to the barn, leaving a trail of blood behind.

SMITHSON (CONT'D)

Now back to your quarters! All of you!

Smithson kicks his horse and rides off. The crowd slowly disperses, everyone going back to their respective locations, chatting in muted tones among themselves.

INT. MRS. SMITHSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Smithson is both furious and frustrated, as he walks around the room and ransacks the furniture. He pulls out drawer after drawer, searches them, spilling female undergarments and other stuff all over the floor in the process, but not finding what he's looking for. Now knowing where to search next, he sits down on the bed with both hands to his head.

SMITHSON

Damn! What has she done with the bloody jewelry? Stupid bitch must have pawned them off.

(yelling)

Adassa! Adassa! Get in here!

Adassa hobbles in quickly, breathing heavily.

ADASSA

Yes-yes, Massa?

SMITHSON

Where's my wife's jewelry? What has she done with them?

ADASSA

I-I wouldn't know that, Massa. Missis-Missis don't tell me her business, sah.

SMITHSON

Alright! Alright! Just clean this mess up!

ADASSA

Yes, Massa.

SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING

The slaves are gathered in little groups, chatting in muted tones. Danso comes running around to Adisa, breathless.

ADISA

What's going on, Danso?

DANSO

I hear that Smithson's dead!

ADISA

What! Are you serious?

DANSO

Yes. It happened last night.

ADISA

Who-who told you that?

DANSO

It's being spread around the plantation like wildfire, that he fell from his horse and broke his neck. Some say his was drunk — others say that it was the ghost of his wife who frightened him.

ADISA

This is great new for us, man!

DANSO

What are you thinking, big brother?

ADISA

Danso, this is our big chance to get out the hell out of here -- the entire place will be in turmoil.

DANSO

I've been thinking the same thing also, big brother. When do we leave?

ADISA

The night of the funeral would be as good as any. Knowing them, there's bound to be a big feast in the great house after the funeral. While they are stuffing themselves and getting drunk, that's when we'll make our move.

DANSO

God is alive.

LATER IN THE EVENING

The sun has now gone down, but the entire plantation is buzzing with excitement. Slaves are gathered together in small groups all over the place, chatting excitedly among themselves. Adisa leans against a tree, observing the proceedings. He sees Pearl come running across to him.

PEART.

Adisa! Have you heard the news?

ADISA

Yes. Pearl, I have to talk to you. Go down by our usual place and wait for me -- I'll join you there soon.

PEARL

Okay, Adisa.

He watches her as she runs off into the bushes. He looks around quickly and then runs off behind her.

BEHIND THE SHRUBS

PEARL

Massa's dead!

ADISA

I know. That's why I want to talk to you.

PEARL

About what?

ADISA

I'll be leaving this place.

PEARL

Leaving?

ADISA

Yes. My brother and I -- we'll be running away.

PEARL

Running away? When?

ADISA

On the night of the funeral.

PEARL

Are you crazy, Adisa? Don't you know what they'll do to you if they catch you?

ADISA

Yes, I know what they'll do -- but they'll have to catch us first.

PEARL

Where-where will you go?

Pearl has a very concerned look in her eyes, as she stares up into Adisa's face.

ADISA

Not sure yet. But I do know that I have some unfinished business to take care of. I still have another brother and two sisters somewhere out there. I have to find them.

PEARL

I-I understand, Adisa.

ADISA

But don't you worry now. I'll be back for you -- no matter how long it takes -- and-and I'm going to make you my wife -- because I-I love you, Pearl.

Pearl buries her face in his chest and begins to sob softly. Adisa places both arms around her.

PEARL

I'll be waiting for you, Adisa -- just-just promise me that you'll be very careful -- please.

ADISA

Danso and I, we're trained Ashanti warriors, we know how to take care of ourselves.

Pearl throws her arms around his neck. Adisa locks her tightly in his arms, and kisses her on the forehead.

PEARL

Bye, Adisa. Bye.

FADE TO:

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - EVENING/NIGHT

The evening sun is still shining brightly. The mourners begin to pour in - some on horseback, others in the carriages, everyone dressed in black.

We see Adisa and Danso in the top of large cedar tree, peeping out from among the leaves. The tree is less than twenty feet from the front gate of the plantation.

A large group of mourners are now gathered around the grave side. The preacher begins the ceremony to commit Smithson's body to the ground.

Soon, we hear voices rising up, as the mourners being to sing funeral hymns for their fallen comrade. The brothers watch with interest, as Smithson's body is lowered into the ground and covered up with dirt.

The sun has now begun to set behind the distant mountain. Uriah rides down, locks the gate, rides back up.

The funeral is now over, the crowd begins to drift away from the burial ground, and up to the great house.

The brothers wait until its completely dark, then climb down from off the tree.

ADISA

Damn good thing we got out before the curfew.

DANSO

Yeah, otherwise we would be locked down with the others.

ADISA

By the time they miss us, we should be miles away.

Adisa runs across to a nearby clump of bushes, retrieves a large bag, which he slings over his shoulder. Under the cover of darkness, the brothers sneak up to the large iron-gate, climb up, and quickly scuttle over. They jump down into the road, and begin to breathe the air of freedom.

EXT. ON THE ROAD - NIGHT

Adisa opens the bag, quickly takes out two changes of clothes, and two pairs of shoes.

ADISA

Here, put these on -- can't let it appear too obvious that we're runaways.

DANSO

(smiling)

Where did you get these? These are fancy clothes, man!

ADISA

Compliments of the Mistress.

They quickly change into the new clothes, and toss the slave garments into the bushes.

ADISA (CONT'D)

We'll have to travel by night and rest at day.

Absolutely energized, the brothers begin their walk into freedom. Sheltered by the pitch darkness, they head in the general direction of the town, using the main roadway. The lights of the town twinkle in the distance.

ADISA (CONT'D)

The town should be about four or five miles away. We should be able to get there within the next two hours.

DANSO

Then what?

ADISA

When we reach that bridge we'll cross it.

They walk on in silence. Soon, we hear the sound of horses coming up in the distance. They look around and see lights coming towards them.

DANSO

They're coming back from the funeral. Let's get off the road.

They slip off the road and dart into the bushes for cover. There they lie on their stomachs, and wait, as one by one, the horses and carriages go by. The road is soon quiet and dark again.

They get back on the road, and walk briskly until they come up into the vicinity of the town. Except for the well lit pub, most of the town is in darkness. Coming from the pub, we hear shouting and drunken laughter - both male and female voices.

EXT. IN THE TOWN - NIGHT

Under the cover of darkness, the brothers cautiously make their way up the road, until they are almost opposite to the pub. The pub is filled with people, drinking, shouting, laughing, showing absolutely no remorse for their fallen comrade, whom they have just laid to rest. Half a dozen horse pulled carriages are parked in the darkness outside.

ADISA

They've stopped for drinks.

DANSO

Adisa, I have an idea.

ADISA

Tell me, brother.

DANSO

These backras -- they're all drunk.

ADISA

So?

DANSO

So why not help ourselves to a coupe of horses? With horses, we could be miles away within hours. We could be in another parish before the sun is up.

Adisa ponders on the idea for a brief moment.

ADISA

Smart thinking, Danso, but we'll have to be careful not to startle the horses. As drunk as they are, they all carry guns, and they know how to use them.

DANSO

Don't worry. I'm an expert with horses.

They look around carefully, no one in the street, and the light coming out from the pub is very dim. Meanwhile, the men inside the pub and their noisy female companions continue to make quite an uproar. The brothers look at each other, everything appears to be in their favor.

DANSO (CONT'D)

You wait here.

ADISA

Be careful. They might come out to relieve themselves.

DANSO

This will be like taking candy from a baby.

Danso sneaks across the road. Adisa crouches in the darkness and watches him, as he quickly unhitches two horses from the rail they're tied to. The horses snort, but the sound is drowned out by the noise coming from the pub.

Danso does not unhitch the horses from the carriage, as expected, but instead, jumps up onto the carriage.

DANSO (CONT'D)

Come on, Adisa! Come!

Adisa scuttles across the road, jumps up on the carriage, beside his brother. Danso pulls out, slowly guiding the horses through the darkness. They now reach the edge of the town. The drunken laughter continues in the distance.

ADISA

That was quick, but why the coach too?

DANSO

This was so easy, man. I just couldn't resist taking the temptation of taking coach too, and riding out of here in fine style. Furthermore, coaches are valuable; we should be able to sell this one for good money.

ADISA

Good thinking again, little brother.

DANSO

(laughing)

I'd sure like to see the looks on those backras' faces when they come out and realize that one of their coaches is missing.

EXT. ON THE ROAD - NEXT MORNING

The sun has begun to creep up from behind the mountain. Danso looks exhausted, so does Adisa.

DANSO

I think we'd better rest the horses.

ADISA

We need rest ourselves, also.

DANSO

I believe we might have already crossed into the next parish.

ADISA

Yes, we should be in St. Ann by now, we've been traveling all night.

DANSO

I'm pulling off here.

EXT. IN THE BUSHES - DAY

Danso turns the horses off the road, through the dense vegetation, ending up between some tall bamboo trees. They jump down. Adisa still has the bag strapped to his back. Danso detaches the horses from the carriage, and hitches them to some nearby trees. They clear a path through the think foliage, and pull the coach in. Danso jumps back up onto the coach, goes into the back, and begins to search around.

ADISA

We need food for ourselves, and water for the horses.

DANSO

We'll just live off the land -- we were trained for that.

Danso emerges with a large grin on his face, holding up food container in his hand.

DANSO (CONT'D)

Look, Adisa!

ADISA

What's that?

Danso lifts off the cover and peeps in.

DANSO

(grinning)

Sure smells like food!

ADISA

Food? Hey, that's great!

DANSO

Hey, rice and meat! Whitey's been mighty generous to us.

ADISA

Stashed away from last night's feast, I guess.

DANSO

And you'd never believe this.

Danso holds up a half empty bottle of rum, grinning broadly.

DANSO (CONT'D)

Want a drink?

ADISA

Nah, nah -- too early for me. I'll settle for the food.

Adisa jumps up onto the carriage beside his brother. They divide the food between them, and eat.

Adisa jumps back down from off the carriage. He takes the bag from over his back, opens it, extracts the purse.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Now, let's see how well I did in the great house.

DANSO

Hey, that purse is stuffed.

Adisa opens the purse and throws out the glistening contents on the ground. Danso's eyes dazzles with disbelief.

DANSO (CONT'D)

What! How-how-did you --

ADISA

I told you, little brother -- the Missis gave them to me the night before she jumped.

They sit on the ground, sort the loot, and count it.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Let's see what we have here. One hundred and twenty pounds in cash. Nine pairs of golden earrings. Eleven golden chains. Two gold and pearl necklaces. Seven large golden bracelets. One thick golden wedding band, studded with diamonds, and an assortment of small golden broaches. Not bad at all, little brother.

DANSO

No, not bad at all. That backra woman really loved you.

ADISA

Maybe she did. But I guess she just didn't want her husband to get his hands on them.

DANSO

Well, We're supposed to be rich.

ADISA

One little problem though -- how do we dispose of it? We're runaway slaves.

DANSO

We'll find a way, when the time comes.

Adisa picks up the loot and replaces it in the purse. They climb back up into the coach, lie on their backs. Within seconds of each other, they are snoring away loudly.

LATER THAT DAY

Adisa is the first to awaken. He sits up, rubs his eyes, looks up at the position of the sun, then shakes Danso.

ADISA

Wake up, Danso, its past midday. We have to find water for the horses.

DANSO

Yeah, yeah. Let's take a ride down the road.

They both jump down from the carriage. Danso walks across to the horses, unhitches them, brings them around. They mount the horses and head out to the road.

EXT. ROADWAY - DAY

They ride abreast of each other. The road is stony, winding and lonely - not a single living soul in sight.

After some time, the first sign of human life presents itself, someone comes riding towards them on a little brown donkey.

JIM, late forties, slender, jet-black, rides up, stops in front of them. The little donkey is laden with yams.

ADTSA

Hey there, brother.

JIM

Who the hell are you? I've never seen you boys around here before!

ADISA

We-we're just passing through these parts, man.

Jim stares from one to the other.

JIM

Brothers?

ADISA

Yeah.

JIM

I see the resemblance. Are you fellows runaway slaves?

DANSO

So what if we are? What are you going to do -- turn us in?

Jim stares at them with much interest.

JIM

But, no, you boys couldn't be runaway slaves, No, you couldn't be. How would you come by those horses? No black man own horses in these parts. And look at those clothes -- no slave ever dresses like that. Just who the hell are you boys?

DANSO

What's the matter -- are you envious of us?

Jim displays a toothless grin.

JIM

Envy? I envy no man. I am a proud black man, a son of the soil! I'm no backra's slave! With these two hands, I tilled the soil, and made myself a man.

DANSO

So, you are a farmer?

JIM

Yes, and a proud one too. That's how I make my living

ADISA

Does farming pay that much?

JIM

Yes, if you put your heart and soul into it.

ADISA

So how did you get land?

JIM

Why are you asking so many questions? Are you boys spies? You come around riding on fancy horses, dresses in expensive clothes. Who the hell are you fellows?

DANSO

Just two escaped slaves, riding stolen horses. Does that satisfy your curiosity?

JTM

So why didn't you boys say so in the first place? Now this sheds a whole new light on things. It's dangerous for blacks to be traveling around without freedom papers. You boys have to be careful — the constables are always on the lookout for escaped slaves.

DANSO

So what can we do?

JIM

First, you need to get rid of those horses -- you'll only draw attention to yourselves. And secondly, you must avoid the town as much as you can.

ADISA

How easy is it to get these horses sold?

JIM

Not too difficult. But your sure won't be able to do that.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

I can do that for you --for a small percentage of the returns, of course.

ADISA

How much?

JTM

Fifty percent. Take it or leave it.

DANSO

Fifty percent? You're crazy, man! That's half of our money!

JIM

You're in no position to bargain -- you can't sell them yourselves. My offer stands, and like I said before, take it or leave it.

ADISA

You drive a hard bargain, man.

JIM

That's how I've managed to survive in this harsh world of the backras.

ADISA

Okay, deal. We also have a very expensive coach hidden in the bushes, can you get rid of that also?

JIM

A coach? You boys stole a coach also? You fellows aren't easy. I know the right person to take them to -- Patcheye Edwards a crooked backra man, and an old drunkard -- he specializes in stolen goods.

DANSO

So how do we know that we can trust you?

JIM

Actually, you don't. That's a chance you'll have to take.

DANSO

By the way, where can I find some water for these horses?

JIM

Follow me. I have water over by my place.

They turn the horses around and follow behind Jim. Not too far down the road, they turn off unto a narrow dirt track, then all the way up to a little board house in the bushes.

JIM (CONT'D)

This is my castle. You fellows are welcome to stay here until you get yourselves sorted out. I have a spare room, you can use it.

ADTSA

Thanks. Do you live here alone?

JIM

Sure. Women and children only complicate one's life.

Jim walks into the house, and comes back out with a bottle of rum and three battered enamel mugs.

JIM (CONT'D)

Let's have a drink, boys.

DANSO

Got to water the horses first.

JIM

Sure, there's a trough around by the back of the house.

Adisa and Jim pour out a drink, while Danso leads the horses around to the back of the house.

ADISA

So where is your farm?

JIM

(pointing)

Over that hill.

Danso comes back around and pours himself a drink.

DANSO

How did you come by this land?

JTM

Just took it.

ADISA

Just took it?

JIM

Yes, of course. This is idle land -no one cares about it. They say it
belongs to the crown, or some
stupid thing like that. What does
the king of England care about
these bushes?

ADISA

Are you saying then, that we could take a piece of land for ourselves?

JIM

Who am I to authorize you to touch backra's land? I am just a poor, black, humble, son of a slave woman! Listen, man, if you want to use the land, use it. Believe me, it's none of my business what you do.

ADISA

(lifting mug)

Let's drink to freedom. Bottoms up.

They clash mugs together, and swallow in one shot.

DANSO

To freedom!

Without warning, a loud CLAP of thunder reverberates across the open country. Frightened, they scamper inside the hut.

JIM

Where did that come from? This must be a sign.

DANSO

A good one -- or a bad one?

JIM

Could be a sign of prosperity, or could be one of destruction, only God himself knows the answer.

Anyhow, let me get some food going.

Jim walks into his "kitchen," which is actually a few pieces of old rusty zinc, leaned up against the side of his house.

MONTAGE

- --Jim quickly gets a fire going.
- --He places a big black pot on the fire.

- --Jim cooks yams and salted fish.
- --Jim dishes out food, hands containers to brothers.
- -- They eat, chat, pour out rum, drink.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BUSHES - DAY

The brothers clear away the bushes, reveal the coach to Jim.

JIM

Hey, that's a pretty valuable piece of equipment you boys have here. I'll try and get the best price I can.

Jim wastes no time. He hitches the horses to the coach, ties his little brown donkey to the back of the coach, then jumps up into the coach and drives off.

DANSO

Do you believe we can trust him?

ADTSA

Do we have a choice?

DANSO

So, where do we go from here?

ADISA

We could probably try our hands at some farming.

DANSO

Farming? Where will we get land from?

ADISA

We'll just take it. It's right here -- all around us -- lying idle.

DANSO

You're planning to capture backra's land -- just like that? You're one crazy Ashanti.

ADISA

With this jewelry we have, and the money we should get from Jim, we could invest in a farming project.

(MORE)

ADISA (CONT'D)

If we work real hard, we should be able to put enough money together -- we could go looking for the others -- we could purchase their freedom.

DANSO

(not totally convinced)
Well -- we could try, I guess.

EXT. JIM'S SPREAD - DAY

Adisa and Danso sit under a tree, waiting impatiently. Jim eventually comes around, riding on his donkey, a cunning grin on his face. They get up, walk across to meet him.

JIM

I have both good news, and bad news for you boys. Which one do you want first?

DANSO

Spit out the bad one first.

JIM

The bad news is that I didn't get the price that I asked for. Patcheye claimed that I was in no position to bargain, because word is out that two runaway slaves have stolen two horses and a carriage, and he was pretty sure that these were they. But the real bad news is that they know that you boys are around these parts.

DANSO

What! They must be out there searching for us right now!

JIM

Take it easy now, son. No one is going to find you here.

DANSO

So what's the good news?

JIM

Well, the good news is that since I didn't get the price I was asking, instead of taking fifty percent for my fees, I'll only take forty.

DANSO

Son-of-a-bitch!

ADISA

How much did he give you?

JIM

I asked for three hundred pounds, but the cunning bastard only gave me two hundred -- told me to take it or leave it.

ADISA

That gives us one hundred and twenty, and you eighty.

JIM

Hey, you boys are also fine mathematicians.

Jim jumps down from his donkey, pushes his hand into his pocket and comes up with a bundle of bills. He counts the notes slowly, then places them in Adisa's hand. Adisa smiles, but Danso is skeptical.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - DAY/NIGHT

MONTAGE - FARMING PROJECT

- --Adisa, Danso, with Jim tagging behind, walk through the bushes, seeking out good farming land.
- --We see Adisa and Danso clearing land, removing stones, cutting down trees. The rain comes pouring down on them.
- --We see them ploughing land in the night, with assistance of a donkey. The moon shines brightly down on them.
- --We see them sowing seeds, early in the morning, the sun not yet up
- -- The brothers construct a farm hut, Jim lends a helping hand.
- --They reap their crops, their backs glistening in the heat of the midday sun.
- --They load the produce on Jim's donkey. Jim rides off, smiling.
- --Jim counts money, places it in Adisa's hand, everyone smiles, satisfied.

-- They drink of rum together, toasting with battered mugs.

END MONTAGE

FADE TO:

TWO YEARS LATER

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - DAY

Jim rides off with the donkey laden with produce. The brothers stand under a tree and watch him.

ADISA

We've to take this business to another level.

DANSO

What do you have in mind?

ADISA

We have to cut out the middle man. Jim's getting too much of our money. He's now practically living off us -- he has even stopped farming.

DANSO

I've never trusted him from the beginning. But what are our options?

ADISA

Market our produce ourselves.

DANSO

That could be risky.

ADISA

Life is full of risks, my brother. Come on, let's follow Jim and see who's buying our produce.

DANSO

Good idea.

They jump on their donkeys, trail Jim, but keeping at a safe distance behind him. But just after a short distance down the road, Jim pulls off into the produce market. The brothers stare at each other in disbelief. Jim quickly transacts business with a stout, masculine looking woman, and off loads all the produce at her feet.

She counts out money and pays him. Jim smiles, places the money in his pocket, jumps on his donkey, and rides off in the direction of the town.

ADISA

The son-of-a-bitch been ripping us off all along! The market's almost in our backyard!

DANSO

Bastard! I feel like ramming my fist into his stupid face!

ADISA

No, we mustn't do that. He could make life difficult for us.

DANSO

He's nothing more than a cheap crook!

ADISA

He sure won't be putting his crooked hands on anymore of our money. Let's not say anything to him -- we'll just take the stuff to the market ourselves.

EXT. PRODUCE MARKET - DAY

The heavyset VENDOR stares up at them, tobacco pipe between her thick lips, her huge breasts almost spilling out of her clothes.

VENDOR

What do you boys want? I've never seen you around here before.

DANSO

You've been buying our produce.

VENDOR

Oh no! Oh no! I've never done any business with any of you before! Who are you anyway?

ADISA

We've been sending our stuff with Jim.

VENDOR

Oh, Jim. Oh yes. I like the stuff Jim brings. Always clean, well grown. You boys grow that stuff?

The brothers glance at each other and smile.

ADISA

Yes, we do.

VENDOR

Come, unload the stuff over here, let me see what you have today.

They quickly unloaded the produce. The burly woman walks across, takes a brief look at the stuff.

VENDOR (CONT'D)

These look good. I'll take everything for same as I pay Jim.

ADISA

Okay.

She takes out money, counts it, places it in Danso's hand.

VENDOR

Bring more, soon.

DANSO

Next week.

They jump on their donkeys and ride out of the market.

EXT. ROADWAY - DAY

They ride up the road with the look of victory on their faces.

ADISA

Imagine, Jim was taking almost half of our money.

DANSO

Son-of-a-bitch! I could kill him.

FADE TO:

ONE YEAR LATER

INT. FARM HUT - EVENING

Adisa and Danso sit on the bunk with the strongbox open in from of them. Adisa takes out all the notes, counts them, and then stacks them back away neatly.

ADISA

Another good year. Over five hundred pounds strong. We're getting there slowly but surely. Soon can go hunting for our siblings.

DANSO

Yep, thanks to stop using Jim's expensive services.

ADISA

We need some supplies -- really miss Jim for those trips into town.

DANSO

We'll just have to be careful.

EXT. GOLDEN GROVE TOWN - DAY

Adisa and Danso ride slowly into town, looking apprehensively over their shoulders. It seems pretty safe, so they ride up to the supply store, dismount, and begin to tie the donkeys to the rail. A YOUNG WOMAN, late twenties, emerges from the store right at that moment. Adisa freezes. He stares at her as if he's seen a ghost.

DANSO

What's wrong, Adisa?

ADISA

It-it-it's Kamilah! The girl-girl I
met on the ship!

Adisa points a shaking finger at the woman. She's beautiful, and elegantly dressed in the latest fashion of the day.

DANSO

What are you talking about? She's no slave.

ADISA

Yes, it's her! This is absolutely unbelievable!

Adisa begins to lung forward, Danso quickly grabs him by the arm, restrains him.

A MULATTO MAN, mid thirties, tall, sophisticated looking, walks out also. Three well-dressed CHILDREN, five, six, and eight, follow right behind him. The man walks up briskly behind the woman, and places his hand around her waist.

Adisa tries to wrestle himself free, but Danso, using all his strength, restrains him.

DANSO

Don't be a fool, Adisa! Don't you see she's with her family!

ADISA

Just got to -- just-just got to talk to her.

DANSO

And expose us? You bust out there in front of her, and her husband is bound to call the constable on you!

ADISA

Just-just got to --

DANSO

Hey, I thought you were in love with Pearl?

ADISA

Of course I love Pearl, but this girl -- she's --

DANSO

What do you expect, Adisa! Do you expect her to leave her husband, her three little children, and her middle class life, and come shack up with you in your hut?

They watch as man takes her hand, and helps her up into the waiting coach. The three children jumped up also, and they drove off.

ADISA

She was just too pretty to remain a slave.

FADE TO:

EXT. GOLDEN GROVE TOWN - EVENING

Adisa and Danso, on their donkeys, make their way up to the supply store. They dismount and begin to hitch the animals.

Everything's happening so quickly. Shouting. Feet running toward them. They spin around. It's the CONSTABLE, fifty, white, overweight - and his DEPUTY, thirty, Mulatto, as skinny as a toothpick - rushing towards them.

> CONSTABLE (screaming)

It's the Smithson's runaways! Don't let them get away! Grab them!

Adisa tries to bolt as two uniformed men rush towards them. Not quick enough. The deputy springs in front of him, pointed a revolver straight in his face.

DEPUTY

ADTSA

Don't even breathe, boy, or Run, Danso! Run! I'll blow your brains out

this very minute!

The man rams the barrel of the gun against the side of Adisa's head. Adisa flinches, but remains standing. Danso bolts.

DEPUTY

CONSTABLE

Grab the other one! Don't let him get away!

Bloody bastard! Slipped right outta my hands!

INTERCUT: STREET/BUSHES

BUSHES

Danso flies through the bushes, carving out a path for himself. The constable dashes into the bushes behind him, in hot pursuit, gun in hand, YELLING.

STREET

Two quick shots RING out. Adisa cringes. Fearing the worst, he tries to make a bid for freedom, but doesn't get far. The deputy smashes the gun into the back of his head. Adisa's world goes dark, he falls to the ground.

BUSHES

Danso, sprinting like a gazelle, increases distance between himself and his pursuer. The overweight constable quickly gives up, crawls out of the bushes, returns to the street.

STREET

The constable lumbers up, breathing heavily.

CONSTABLE (CONT'D)

Son-of-a-bitch got away.

DEPUTY

Don't worry, we'll make this one talk.

INT. JAILHOUSE - LATE EVENING

They drag Adisa into jailhouse. He regains consciousness as they hurl him headlong into an empty cell. The door slams with a loud CLANG, sending chills up his spine.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSHES - LATE EVENING

Danso makes his way through the thick bushes, keeping parallel with the road. He looks back constantly, but sees no sign of anyone trailing him. He reaches the footpath, and runs all the way up to the hut.

INT. FARM HUT - NIGHT

Danso barges in, throws himself down on the bunk, and stares up into the ceiling. He gets up, begins to walk around disconcertingly, rams his foot into object in the dark. He Yells, picks up object, it's a thick iron bar. For a brief moment, he stares fixedly at the iron bar in his hand. Suddenly, he has an idea.

He walks around the hut, searches, comes up a small metal container. He fills the container with pieces of coal, which he quickly lights. He takes up an old shirt, and uses it to hold the container. He picks up the piece of iron, places it over his shoulder, then heads out into the darkness.

EXT. GOLDEN GROVE TOWN - NIGHT

Danso walks up the main street of the town. Apart from noisy pub, the town is mostly in darkness, quiet and serene. He stops, hides the container, and the piece if iron, behind an old abandoned building. Keeping in the shadows, he continues up the street, and around to the back of the jailhouse. The jailhouse window is about seven feet off the ground, with seven thick iron bars, evenly spaced across, looking quite formidable.

DANSO (whispers) Adisa! Adisa!

No response. He picks up some pebbles, tosses one through the window into the cell. We hear shuffling, Adisa's head rises up by the window.

DANSO (CONT'D)

Adisa! It's me.

ADTSA

Danso?

DANSO

I'm getting you out. Just stay by the window and wait until I return.

ADISA

I knew you'd do it, little brother.

Danso comes back down the street, retrieves the burning coals from the back of the building. He scuttles across to a two-story dwelling building, which faces the pub. He peeps into the pub, three men drinking inside, one appears to be the constable. He digs away at the base of the building until the woodwork is exposed, then empties the container onto the woodwork. He blows on the coals, until woodwork also begins to glow. He sits and waits. Soon the woodwork begins to blaze. The fire grows quickly, the building is soon ablaze.

VOICES (O.S.)

Fire! Fire!

Those in the pub rush out, SHOUTING, raising the alarm. The sleeping town comes to life instantly. People race out of their houses towards the burning building with containers of water. Shouts of FIRE, FIRE, echo right across the town.

With the town now in complete confusion, Danso retrieves the iron bar, and races up to the jailhouse. He passes up the iron bar to Adisa, through the cell window.

DANSO

Dig out the window! Quick!

We hear iron clanging against iron as Adisa tries to break himself out. Doesn't sound like he's making much progress.

DANSO (CONT'D)

Hurry up, Adisa! Hurry!

ADISA

I'm trying my best! Just not getting enough grip.

Adisa! Stop hitting against the metal, try digging in to the wall!

ADISA

I'll try.

He makes progress this time, as he rips one side of the iron frame out of the crumbling mortar. Feet come running quickly up the street. Time is now of the essence - Adisa still hasn't removed the window completely.

DANSO

Hurry, Adisa! They're coming back!

CONSTABLE (O.S.)

Check on the prisoner! Quick! This appears to be a decoy!

Simultaneously, as we hear them barging into the jail, we hear a loud CLANG, as metal meets concrete, then, a dull THUD, as Adisa jumps down to the ground.

CONSTABLE (O.S.) (CONT'D) Shoot them! Shoot them!

DANSO

Come on, Adisa!

Gunshots RING out. The brothers, flying, quickly disappear into the dark bushes.

FADE TO:

TWO YEARS LATER

INT. FARM HUT - DAY

Adisa and Danso sit around the strong box, counting cash. The box is almost filled with notes and coins.

DANSO

It seems we're wealthy, man.

ADISA

Yeah, I guess we are. But our family is out there -- somewhere -- suffering. We have to find them, man.

DANSO

That's true, Adisa, but we have no idea where they are.

We'll just have to steal onto a couple of plantations, and try to locate them.

DANSO

But we have absolutely no idea where these other plantations are located, Adisa.

ADISA

I'll check with Jim -- he seems to know everything.

DANSO

Jim! I don't trust one bone in that bastard.

ADISA

Neither do I, but I need information.

EXT. JIM'S SPREAD - DAY

The brothers walk up, Jim is in the field weeding.

JIM

What are you fellows up to now? Come to pass on some of your wealth to poor old Jim?

ADISA

Listen, Jim, we need some info.

JIM

Well, as long as I can help.

ADISA

We need find our family.

JIM

That could be a mammoth task.

DANSO

We know that. That's why we need your help.

JIM

I don't think I can help you boys with this. I'm an old man now. I wouldn't ne able to --

We just need you tell us where the other plantations are located.

JIM

Oh, that's easy. There are four large plantations in this parish. All of them can be found off the main road, traveling easterly. The first one is about twenty miles from Golden Grove.

ADISA

Thanks, man.

MTT

When do you boys intend to leave?

ADISA

Soon. We need two good horses. Can you get them for us?

JIM

Shouldn't be a problem. Should be able to get two good ones from Patcheye.

EXT. BUSHES - NIGHT

The brothers stumble through the bushes in the darkness. Danso carries the strongbox on his shoulder. They decide on a location, dig a hole, bury the box, and cover the area with bushes. They mark the location with three large stones, then stumble back down to the hut. They gather some supplies together, mount their horses, and ride off into the darkness.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

They ride up to a large rusty iron, with barbed wire and sharp iron spikes on top. The gate is securely locked.

DANSO

Sure won't be able to climb over this one.

ADISA

We'll have to wait until they open the gate in the morning.

Hope we'll be able to identify them. It's been almost twenty years.

ADISA

Don't worry. We'll know them all right.

DANSO

Got to find a safe place to hide the horses.

Danso leads the horses into darkness.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS

MONTAGE

- -- The sun rises up slowly. The brothers hide in bushes in front of gate, waiting.
- --A man rides down on horseback, pulls gate open, rides back in.
- --The brothers scuttle across the road, look around carefully, then creep in onto the plantation.
- --They move stealthily through the bushes, then scurry up a large tree.
- --They sit in the tree, looking down on slaves as they go about their business. They see no sign of their siblings.
- --They climb up into another tree, still no evidence of their siblings on this plantation.
- -- The sun sets. They look at each other, shake their heads, climb down from the tree, and steal off plantation.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BUSHES - LATE EVENING

Danso leads the horses out behind him.

ADISA

They're not here.

DANSO

Definitely not.

If we get going now, we should reach the other one before dawn.

DANSO

We should, if the old coot is correct.

They grab a quick bite, mount their horses, and ride off into the dusk.

EXT. ROADWAY - MORNING

It's close to the break of day, the stars begin to fade away. The brothers climb quickly over the gate. This plantation is poorly maintained. We see lots of broken down, dilapidated buildings, felled trees not removed - the unmistakable signs of impending financial ruin.

They quickly locate the slave quarters, and easily find refuge nearby, inside an old broken down barn, which is overgrown by shrubs, providing the perfect hiding place.

INT. BROKEN DOWN BARN - MORNING

Peeping out through the bushes, they wait for the day to come alive. Soon, one by one, the slaves begin to emerge from their quarters. They see three females come walking up a footpath towards them, two turn off, but one keeps coming.

Danso grabs Adisa by the shoulder, shakes him violently.

DANSO

Look, Adisa!

Danso points a nervous finger at the pretty young woman who is walking up the path towards them.

ADISA

My God! It's Abena!

They stare at her in awe, their mouths sag open. ABENA, twenty-eight, cool dark complexion, shapely, comes closer.

DANSO

She's all grown up, but it's her! It's her!

ADISA

To God be the glory!

She is now adjacent to the shed. Danso jumps out, grabs her by the arm, puts a hand over her mouth, and pulls her inside.

ABENA

(startled)

What-what the --

ADISA

DANSO

Abena! Abena!

Abena!!

Abena is speechless. Her eyes pop open wide in their sockets as if she's looking at two ghosts. She almost falls, Danso keeps her standing. She opens her mouth, tries to speak, only a low gurgle comes out.

DANSO

ADISA

It's us Abena - your brothers, Danso and Adisa!

Abena! Abena! I don't believe it.

Adisa and Danso, both grab her in their arms, almost crushing the breath out of her. Completely dazed, Adana claws into their backs with her fingernails, and begins to sob.

ABENA (CONT'D)

Where-where -- how-how did -- Oh God! I-I thought -- I-I thought you were dead.

DANSO

Where are the others?

ABENA

The-the others? They-they're all here. Kamau, Adana -- right here on this plantation.

ADISA

Kamau! Adana! Here! Alive! I don't
believe it!

ABENA

My brothers, oh my brothers. It's been almost twenty years

Adisa runs his finger through Abena's long braids as if to convince himself that all this is real.

ADISA

Go now, Abena, before they come looking for you. Bring the others later -- we'll be right here, waiting.

ABENA

I-I have a son -- I've been telling
him about --

DANSO

We can't wait to meet him, but go now.

Abena looks around carefully, then slips out through the bushes. The two muscular fellows, smiling broadly, reach across and give each other a well-deserved bear hug.

ADISA

Mission almost accomplished.

FADE TO:

SUN DOWN

The brothers sit on the ground leaning against the wall, waiting impatiently. We hear footsteps coming around. The shrubs part, Abena rushes in with her son, BOMANI, eleven, running behind her.

ABENA

This is Bomani, my son.

(to the lad)

These are you two uncles! Uncle Adisa and Uncle Danso.

Bomani beams from ear to ear, he rushes into Adisa's arms, pulls himself out, then rushes into Danso's.

BOMANI ADISA

Uncle Adisa! Uncle Danso! Hey, what's up, champ?

DANSO

Fine lad you have here. How old is he.

BOMANI

Eleven.

We hear footsteps again. This time, ADANA, thirty, pretty, shapely, and KAMAU, twenty-five, muscular, rush in.

KAMAU ADANA

Adisa! Danso! My brothers! My brothers!

DANSO ADISA

Kamau! Adana! God is good!

They embrace each other and cry on one another's shoulders.

KAMAU

This is like a dream!

ADISA

We're getting you all out of here.

KAMAU

Yes, we can all run away with you tonight!

ADISA

No, no, no. Not that way. Legally.

KAMAU

But-but how-

ADTSA

We're gonna buy your freedom.

ADANA

Buy our freedom? How-how will you -

ADISA

We have money. We're business men.

ABENA

KAMAU

Businessmen! How-how-

Businessmen? What type of --

DANSO

Long story.

ADISA

You have to go to the Baptist missionaries -- explain to them. They'll arrange the transaction with the backras. We'll be back with the money as soon as we take care of the living arrangements.

ADANA

That should be easy -- they're selling off the slaves -- they say that plantation is facing financial problems.

ADISA

Guess times have changed -- sugar is no longer king. We have to leave now.

They embrace one more time, shed some tears. Danso and Adisa step out of the shed, and disappear in the darkness.

EXT. JIM'S SPREAD - EVENING

The brothers ride up the narrow path towards Jim's house.

DANSO

Let's see what the old coot is up to.

They dismount and walk up to the door.

ADISA

Jim! Jim!

No answer. They push the door and walk in. Jim is gone. Apart from his battered utensils, the place is completely cleaned out. The brothers look at each other, puzzled.

DANSO

Something's just not right here.

ADISA

I have a real bad feeling about this.

They stare at each other. We can see the panic in their eyes.

DANSO ADISA

The strongbox!!

Our money!!

They jump up onto their horses and ride like the devil up to where they had buried the strongbox, expecting the worst.

IN THE BUSHES

They reach the location and jump down from the horses. The area is undisturbed, they breath a huge sigh of relief. They look at each other, just can't figure it out.

ADISA (CONT'D)

So why would he run away from his home?

DANSO

Look Adisa!

Danso points down at the yam field. It seems as if a hurricane has just passed through.

ADISA

Son-of-a-bitch stole our crop!

Gone with the entire crop. I knew from the beginning that he was a damn thief.

INT. FARM HUT - EVENING

They enter in, everything is ransacked. The brothers stare at each other in disbelief.

ADISA

What if we hadn't moved out the money box!!

DANSO

He would've cleaned us out completely, just like that.

ADISA

Damn thief! He'll soon get what's coming to him.

The brothers walk around the hut, they shake their heads in dismay.

EXT. JIM'S SPREAD - DAY

Adisa and Danso walk around in front of Jim's abandoned hut.

ADISA

Danso, I have an idea.

DANSO

What?

ADISA

Jim sure ain't gonna be coming back here, so why not convert his place into a proper house for the family, it's much bigger than ours.

DANSO

Hey, that makes a lot of sense.

ADISA

Let's have a talk with the carpenter tomorrow.

I/E. HOUSE BUILDING PROJECT

MONTAGE

- --The carpenter and the brothers walk through and examine Jim's house. The carpenter makes suggestions.
- -- The carpenter sits down with the brothers, discuss plan.
- --A donkey drawn cart brings in material on site.
- -- The carpenter and his crew are busy at work.
- --Adisa and Danso walk around, examine the progress of the work, nod their heads in satisfaction.

END MONTAGE

INT. FARM HUT - NIGHT

The brothers sit around the table having a drink of rum.

DANSO

They're making good progress, Adisa.

ADISA

Yes, they are. I'll be hitting the road again, pretty soon.

DANSO

Hitting the road? The place isn't yet finished.

ADISA

No, not for them. Pearl. I need to see her badly, man. It's been over four years.

DANSO

Do you really believe she's still waiting for you?

ADISA

Well, I wont know if I don't go and see her.

DANSO

When do we leave?

ADISA

Not we. Me. I'm going this one alone.

What? So who's gonna save your ass when you get in trouble? We travel together, brother.

ADISA

If both of us get caught, that will be the end of everything.

DANSO

Cut the crap, Adisa. You know darn well we wont get caught. When do we leave?

ADISA

Tomorrow night.

EXT. SMITHSON PLANTATION GROUNDS - NIGHT

The brothers emerge out of the darkness, and swiftly climb in, over the large iron gate. They make their way through the bushes, and steal up close to the females slave quarters. A couple of females are milling around outside.

ADISA

Danso, you wait here.

DANSO

Just be careful, man.

Adisa slips closer to the slaves houses. Waits. Soon, a young woman comes walking towards where he was hiding. He recognizes her. It's MAUD, late twenties, one of Pearl's close friends. He waits until she's right up by him, then grabs her. He places his hand over her mouth and drags her into the shadows. She struggles, fighting like a wild cat.

ADISA

Maud, it's me. John. I'm not going to hurt you.

She continues to flutter in his arms, like a captive bird. He holds her firmly, keeping his hand over her mouth.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Maud! I'm not going to hurt you. It's me. It's John. I want to see Pearl.

She finally relaxes, but he keeps his hand over her mouth.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Shh-Shh. I want you to get Pearl for me. Tell her I'm out here waiting for her.

He slowly releases his hand from her mouth, and lets her go. She looks up into his face, confounded.

MAUD

John? How-how did you --

ADISA

Yes, it is I. Get Pearl.

Maud runs off. Adisa watches her as she scampers in through the door of the hut.

Within moments, Pearl, now late twenties, comes peeping out through the door. Adisa watches her as she steps out and comes walking towards him. In the dim light, she looks like a bronze goddess - just simply beautiful - her slender shapely figure, her erect breasts, her smooth black skin, and her tall hair, held together in large plaits that extends down to her shoulders.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Pearl! Over here.

She hesitates for a split second, locates him in the darkness, then leaps into his arms. He grabs her tightly, kisses her passionately.

PEARL

Adisa! Oh, Adisa!

She just clings to him, throws her slender arm around his thick neck, begins kissing him all over again.

ADISA

You-you're so beautiful.

PEARL

You're okay Adisa! Thank God you're okay! I was worried sick about you - wondering if I'd ever see you again. Hold me tighter, Adisa.

She trembles in his arms.

ADISA

You smell so good.

PEARL

I miss you so much, Adisa. So much. I-I almost went crazy, just wondering what had become of you. Sometimes I cry all night long.

ADISA

Everything is going to be just fine, my love.

PEARL

Adisa, I have to go now, before-before they close the door. When will --

ADISA

Very soon, baby. Just take good care of yourself.

PEARL

I love you so much, Adisa.

ADISA

Love you too. Remember, I'll be back for you -- real soon.

He kisses her more time, then reluctantly removes his arms from around her. He watches her as she walks away from him, and in through the door. The door closes, engulfing the entire place in darkness.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

The brothers ride beside each other, feeling their way through the pitch darkness.

DANSO

So, was Pearl happy to see you?

ADISA

I guess she was.

DANSO

Still pretty?

ADISA

Most beautiful sight I've seen in four years, man.

They come up to a little grocery store.

Wait here, Adisa. Going to get us a little snack.

Adisa waits in the darkness, while Danso dismounts and walks towards the store. As soon as Danso enters the store, we hear loud SHOUTING. Someone is flung out onto the pavement. It's Jim. Danso burst's out after him, grabs his up to his feet and whacks him across the face.

DANSO (CONT'D)

You stinking, dirty thief!

Adisa dismounts and runs over. The shopkeeper runs out from behind the counter.

JIM

I-I can -- I-I can explain, man.

DANSO

Explain what!

Danso punches him in the face two more times, and then grabs him by the throat, and begins to squeeze the life out of him.

JIM

Come-come on now boys, I-I-didn't really steal your crop. I didn't want them to spoil -- so I reaped them for you -- I didn't know when you boys were coming back.

ADISA

So where's our money then?

MTU

I-I was robbed, man! Robbed! Three men with knives -- they held me up on the road and took everything from me -- my money -- your money -- everything, man!

DANSO

Shut up! You lying son-of-a-bitch! I'm going to break your sleazy neck right here! You thieving, dirty bastard!

Danso rocks him with a solid punch to the mid section, knocking him down to the ground. Danso jumps on him, begins to crush his neck again. Jim's eyes are bulging.

Danso! That's enough! Don't kill him! Remember, he helped us to get started.

Danso reluctantly releases Jim's neck.

DANSO

Jim, if you ever see me again, run! Because I'm going to kill you on sight!

Jim gets up, jumps on his little brown donkey, and scurries off into the darkness.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The brothers walk through the house and examine the finished job. It's looking real good, the workmen did a fine job.

ADISA

Not looking bad at all.

DANSO

Damn good job. Now we can go get them.

ADISA

Yes, we sure can .

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

We see the brothers, stuffing bundles of money into their pockets. They then grab up some supplies and walk out.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOUSE - NIGHT

The brothers mount up on their horses. They ride off into the darkness with four riderless horses trailing behind them, two tied to each horse.

EXT. PLANTATION GROUNDS - DAY

MONTAGE -

- -- The brothers ride up to the plantation gate.
- -- They hide horses securely in bushes nearby.
- -- They creep unto the plantation.

-- They speak with two white Baptist missionaries, then place bundles of money in the missionaries' hands.

--Kamau, Adana, Abena, Bomani, walk out of plantation gate with missionaries, all grinning broadly.

--They embrace one another, get on their mounts, wave goodbye to the missionaries, and ride off.

END MONTAGE

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOUSE - EVENING

Six horses with their riders come slowly up to the house.

ADANA

This is the house?

DANSO

Yeah.

ABENA

KAMAU

It's beautiful! Don't believe this man.

ADISA

Come on, let's go inside!

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

They follow Adisa inside the house, looking around in disbelief.

ADANA ABENA

This is just like a dream. What lovely furniture!

KAMAU

My brothers, you've worked wonders!

ADISA

This is just the beginning. With the family now together, we're going to move mountains. Just two more things to take care of.

KAMAU

What?

ADISA

As of now, we are going to adopt the family name - ASHANTI.

(MORE)

ADISA (CONT'D)

And secondly, you'll all have to learn to read and write. Can't survive otherwise.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - DAY

Adisa and Danso give Kamau a grand tour of their farming project. Kamau is very impressed with what he's seeing.

KAMAU

Hey, this is great.

ADISA

Yes. But we've not been able to realize our full potential. You'll have to be our contact with the outside world. We need to spread our wings a lot more.

KAMAU

Me? I wouldn't --

DANSO

Kamau, you can go places we can't.

ADISA

We're planning to go into livestock rearing -- that's where the real money is.

DANSO

But we'll need to acquire suitable pasture land.

ADISA

That's where you come into the picture, Kamau. You're a free Negro. You can purchase land.

KAMAU

There is much talk going around concerning the emancipation of slavery. That would make you and Danso legally free when it happens.

DANSO

That could be years from now.

KAMAU

Okay, okay, guess I'll just have to try my best to--

No, no, Kamau, you will <u>do</u> your best.

ADISA

There's a fifty-acre piece of property just east of Golden Grove. It's ideal for cattle rearing. I believe we should go after it.

KAMAU

So how would I--

ADISA

You'll have to go to Barrett and Company, in Golden Grove, and negotiate the deal. They are the agents. And you need to get yourself a suit.

KAMAU

Me? A suit? You're crazy, man! you want me dressing up like a backra?

ADISA

You represent the family business now. You'll have to carry yourself like a businessman.

FADE TO:

SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. ASHANTI PROPERTY - DAY

The three take a ride brothers ride through the pasture land. We see Hundreds of cattle grazing, right across the spread. LUKIE, thirty, tall, rides around, giving instructions to the field workers. Lukie looks across, sees them, rides across.

LUKIE

Seven calves born last night, sir.

ADISA

That's great, Lukie.

Lukie rides back across the pasture.

KAMAU

Lukie's a very good foreman.

I was at first hesitant in employing him, but I'm glad I did. Very dependable fellow.

On top of the incline, we see a newly constructed two storey house. The workmen, busy putting on the finishing touches. Although not quite as grandeur as the typical plantation great house, the house is quite impressive, with a large airy balcony on the roof.

ADISA (CONT'D)

The house is almost finished. I'm going to get Pearl next week -- and I'm going alone, Danso.

DANSO

(laughs)

Okay, okay, big brother, if you insist. I guess you should be able to take care of yourself by now.

EXT. SMITHSON PLANTATION GROUNDS - NIGHT

Adisa holds Pearl's hands, and drags her quickly through the darkness. They are now by the front gate.

ADISA

Get on my back, Pearl.

Pearl climbs up and holds onto him tightly. Adisa quickly scuttles over the gate with Pearl on his back.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

Adisa takes Pearl in his arms, kisses her passionately on her lips. He then lifts her up, and places her on her mount. He jumps up on his, and they ride off into the darkness.

PEARL

What took you so long to come back?

ADISA

Long story, but I've gotten you out. That's what matters now.

PEARL

Adisa, I can't tell you how happy I am.

ADTSA

Me too. We have to ride all night.

PEARL

That's just fine with me.

EXT. ASHANTI PROPERTY - EARLY NEXT MORNING

They ride up to the front gate of the property. Adisa dismounts, pushes the gate open. Pearl sits on her horse, watches him, puzzled. He remounts, rides in.

ADISA

(smiling proudly)

Come on, Pearl.

PEARL

Adisa! Where-where are we going?

ADISA

Home.

PEARL

But-but you didn't mention that you were working on a plantation?

ADISA

Of course. We work very hard here.

PEARL

But-but you told me that you had your own --

ADISA

(proudly)

This is all ours, baby.

Pearl is shocked, she almost falls off her horse.

PEARL

This-this is your-your land? Your-your house? All-all those cattle?

ADISA

Surprise. Surprise.

PEARL

This-this is just so unbelievable.

ADISA

That's why I took so long to come back for you. Had to make sure you would be comfortable.

PEARL

Why-why didn't you tell me?

And destroy the surprise?

PEARL

You-you're rich!

ADISA

Well, not quite -- but we're certainly not paupers either.

PEARL

The house is beautiful!

ADISA

Wait until you see inside.

They ride up to the front step of the house. Adisa dismounts, then lifts Pearl down. He holds her hand, leads her up the steps, and into the house.

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

The house is fabulously furnished. The family sits around the dining table having breakfast. Everyone looks up with huge smiles on their faces, as Adisa and Pearl walks in.

ADISA

Everybody, this is Pearl. There's going to be a wedding here soon.

Everyone jumps up from their seats, walks over to Pearl. One by one, they embraced her warmly, and welcome her into the family.

DANSO

She's even more beautiful than the last time I saw her.

BOMANI

Uncle Adisa, I like her!

ADISA

Me too, champ.

Pearl smiles, blushes.

EXT. LAWN IN FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

WEDDING MONTAGE

-- The family and their guests sit on white chairs on the well-manicured lawn in front of the house, waiting anxiously.

- --Adisa emerges in elegant suit.
- -- Pearl emerges in a beautiful white gown.
- -- They stand before Baptist minister, exchange marriage vows.
- --Adisa kisses the bride, lifts her off her feet.
- -- Tears flow down Adana's and Abena's faces
- --The cooks attend to several large pots bubbling on the open fires.
- -- Everyone feasts, drinks, celebrates into the night.
- --Adisa takes Pearl by the hand, steals off into the house.

END MONTAGE

INT. MATRIMONIAL BEDROOM - NIGHT

The NOISY celebrations continue outside, as Adisa and Pearl stand facing each other. He gently begins to disrobes her, one delicate piece at a time. Seeing her naked for the first time, Adisa gasps involuntary, as he stares at her incredible beauty. She stands in front of him, her shapely figure and firm breasts silhouetted against the dim light. She's just simply beautiful.

ADISA (breathless)
You're beautiful.

Pearl throws her arms around his neck. Adisa holds her tightly, gently pushes her backwards unto the bed, and makes love to her for the very first time. Pearl moans softly in his arms.

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Adisa gets up out of bed, walks over to the closet, and comes back with the purse with the jewelry in his hands. He kisses Pearl on her forehead, awakening her. He places the purse in her hands.

ADISA

This is yours.

PEARL

What is it?

Open and look.

Pearl opens the purse, empties the contents on the bed. Her eyes pop wide open.

PEARL

Good Lord! Where did you get this, Adisa?

ADISA

(smiling broadly)

Another surprise.

Pearl places one of the chains around her neck and walks over to the mirror.

PEARL

This is beautiful. Thanks, Adisa.

Adisa smiles.

NINE MONTHS LATER

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

A carriage pulls up in front of the house. Adisa steps out with proud look on his face. He then helps Pearl out of the carriage, who slowly emerges with a new born baby in her hands. The family gathers ground, clap their hands, and showers Pearl with hugs and kisses.

ADISA

His name shall be Upena.

PEARL

Meaning?

ADISA

Upena means life.

FADE TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Adisa jumps out of bed quickly. We hear the sound of horses outside. He rushes over to the window and peeps out into the darkness.

ADTSA

Who's the hell's out there? Get off my land!

Gunshots BARK in the darkness. Adisa hits the deck. The house comes alive with panic.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Everybody! Get down! Get down flat!

We hear a loud CRASH, combined with the SHATTER of glass. The horses gallop away, then silence.

DANSO ADISA

Fire! Fire! They're burning us out!

KAMAU ADISA

Water! Water! Get it from the trough! The

trough!

The back section of the house is ablaze. Confusion reigns supreme. The women scream.

DANSO ABENA

Quick! The fire's spreading! Oh, my God!

PEARL

Lord, have mercy on us!

The brothers scramble outside, grab up containers, fill them with water, rush back in and douse the fire. They do this several times. Soon the fire is under control.

NEXT MORNING

The family walk around and inspect the damage. They all have concerned looks on their faces. A section of the kitchen is badly burned.

ADTSA

They didn't succeed this time -- they're coming back.

PEARL

Who-who could have done this?

ADISA

I don't know, but it sure seems like we have some enemies.

DANSO

White folks did this to us! Black men can't afford horses!

BOMANI

Why, Uncle?

They're envious of us. We're making money -- they're not.

ADISA

Yes. We're doing what black people aren't supposed to do.

DANSO

We have to get guns. They're not going to stop until they ruin us.

ABENA

Guns?

ADISA

Yes, we have to get guns. We've to be ready for them when they return.

INT. PATCHEYE'S SPREAD - DAY

PATCHEYE, sixty-five, white, patch over right eye, sits on a stool in his backyard. He pours out a drink of rum as the bothers ride up. He looks up.

PATCHEYE

Welcome to my humble abode. What can I do for you today, boys? Rum?

DANSO

No. We need guns.

PATCHEYE

Guns? What's wrong?

ADISA

They tried to burn us out last night.

PATCHEYE

You boys are climbing the ladder too fast -- you're making them nervous.

DANSO

Can you help us, man?

PATCHEYE

What exactly do you have in mind?

DANSO

Rifles -- revolvers -- ammunition.

PATCHEYE

Just give me some time -- check back in the morning.

EXT. BALCONY OF HOUSE - NIGHT

The brothers sit in the darkness, rifles in hand, waiting.

ADISA

I think you two, should go get some shuteye. I'll hold the fort. It's after two -- I don't think they'll be coming tonight.

DANSO

Listen.

We hear the distinct of horses coming in the distance.

ADISA DANSO

Horses!

The vipers are back!

ADISA

Quick Kamau! Go inside, wake up the others! Tell them to get flat on the floor!

Kamau slides off the building. He soon climbs back up, takes up his position beside his brothers. With their fingers on the trigger, they position themselves, and wait.

Ghostly images on horseback soon emerge out of the dark shadows, about a dozen of them.

DANSO

Now!

They open fire simultaneously. Deafening ROARS shatter the night silence. The horses in the stable close by, jump and snort. The intruders charge blindly into one another, in confusion. SCREAMING, they flee desperately for their lives. The brothers keep firing until their weapons are empty.

ADISA

Bastards!

DANSO

Come and face us, you bunch of cowards! Why are you running away?

Silence reins once again.

Well, this bunch sure won't be coming back.

ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. PASTURE LANDS - DAY

Adisa rides around the property. Lukie, the foreman, rides across the pasture to meet him.

LUKIE

Mr. Ashanti, I need to talk to you about something.

ADISA

What is it Lukie?

LUKIE

It's about your brother, sir. He's very aggressive towards the men in the field. They beginning resent him.

ADISA

Thanks, Lukie. I'll have a word with him.

LUKIE

Please do sir, he's making my work very difficult.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adisa lies in bed, playing with Upena, who sits on his chest. Pearl walks in.

ADISA

Pearl, I'm becoming very worried about Danso.

PEARL

Me too. I don't know what's come over him.

ADISA

The heavy drinking has transformed him into a completely different person.

PEARL

I hear that he's having constant problems with the workers.

ADISA

Yes. As a matter of fact, the foreman, Lukie, complained to me this morning about his aggressive behavior. I'm afraid that all this money has gotten to his head.

PEARL

Also, that Mulatto woman he's seeing. He's been a different person since he started seeing her.

ADISA

And that woman is a white man's wife.

PEARL

I understand that her husband is very abusive.

ADISA

That may be so, but that doesn't excuse him. I'm going to have a strong talk with him later.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danso stumbles in, drunk, throws himself down on the sofa.

ADISA

Danso, why are you always having altercations with the workers? This is not good for business.

DANSO

You do your bloody job, and allow me to do mine!

ADISA

Calm down, Danso! My job is to ensure that everything goes well with this business. I can't allow you to destroy what we've worked so say to build.

I'm not destroying anything, man!
Its those lazy good for nothing
workers that you have allowed Lukie
to employ. They're the ones who are
going to wreck this business! Not
me!

ADISA

You'd better start exercising control over your actions, especially your excessive drinking!

DANSO

So what's wrong with having a drink?

ADISA

A drink? You're drinking yourself senseless man!

DANSO

So what's that to you?

ADISA

And that mulatto woman you've been going with -- she another man's wife, man!

DANSO

So what about that Smithson woman you used to mess around with?

ADISA

That's different, man.

DANSO

You know what, man, I'm outta here!

Danso jumps up, bolts out through the front door, and slams it so hard that it causes Pearl to come rushing out of the bedroom with Upena in her hand.

PEARL

Is everything alright, Adisa?

ADISA

My brother's gone crazy. Success is making him silly.

FADE TO:

INT. PUB - DAY

Adisa, now forty-one, not looking a day over thirty, sits around a table having a drink with a group of free blacks. Pub owner, JOHN BARRETT, Mulatto, late forties, walks across to Adisa and hands him the newspaper.

BARRETT

Check this out, Ashanti.

Adisa takes the paper out of his hand, looks at it. The headline reads: SLAVES STRIKE.

ADISA

(reads out aloud)

With the wind of emancipation blowing strongly across the island, the Slaves on the Kensington Sugar plantation in St. James have called a strike. The slaves are adamant that they will not go back to work until the owners of the estate decide to pay them fair wages. This is a revolutionary move on the part of the slaves; this has never happened before. The plantation owners were furious, as they see this as a new threat to their dominance. Tensions are running exceedingly high! At the center of the controversy is Baptist minister, Samuel Sharpe. Sharpe, a man of extraordinary intelligence, learned to read and write while still being a slave.

BARRETT

The writing is on the wall -- the Plantocracy is about to crumble.

ADISA

Sharp reminds me so much of myself. I think I'm going to pay the brother a visit.

BARRETT

That's treading dangerous grounds, Ashanti. St. James is sitting on a powder keg right now.

ADISA

That's true, but I believe I have a moral obligation to give some sort of support to the Struggle.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

All the family is gathered together. Adisa walks in.

ADISA

I just want to inform you all that I'll be leaving for St. James tomorrow.

PEARL

For what, Adisa? Tomorrow is Christmas Day. The-the family always spends Christmas together.

ADTSA

This is something I have to do. I have to help Sam Sharpe is with some finances.

PEARL

Adisa, this will be too dangerous!

ADISA

Yes, it is. But if white men in England are fighting so hard for the abolition of slavery, why should we not do our part to help the Struggle.

Pearl rushes across to him, throws both arms around him.

PEARL

Please don't go, Adisa. You could be killed in these rebellions.

ADTSA

Pearl, look how God has blessed us. Do we not owe it to him to help our oppressed brothers and sisters? Slavery is the greatest atrocity that has ever been committed against any race of people!

DANSO

I'm in on this one with you, brother.

KAMAU

Count me in too, Adisa.

ABENA

ADANA

yourselves killed!

You're all going to get St. James is the hornets' nest!

Someone's got to stand with the freedom fighters -- otherwise the Struggle will die.

BOMANI

Can I come too, Uncle?

ABENA

Are you crazy, boy?

DANSO

Let the boy be a revolutionary if he wants to.

ABENA

(screaming)

No! No! No! Over my dead body! I won't let him go with you!

ADISA

Take is easy, Abena. We won't be taking Bomani with us. Furthermore, we can't leave the place unprotected.

FADE TO:

ST. JAMES

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - DAY

A huge crowd is gathered, waiting. Some sit on the ground, some mill around, most armed with cutlasses and large sticks, a few with guns. The brothers hitch their horses and walk among the crowd. The crowd suddenly erupts in a huge ROAR.

SAMUEL SHARP, early thirties, climbs up onto a podium made out of old rum barrels. He begins to address the crowd.

SHARPE

Brothers and sisters, we gather here today before God, to state our disagreement with how we are being treated. No longer will we work without being paid fair wages! No longer will we be slaves! No longer will submit ourselves to the oppressors, to be exploited by them!

A DEAFENING APPLAUSE goes up from the crowd.

SHARPE (CONT'D)

Brothers and sisters, listen to me, the Holy Bible tells me that all men are equal in the sight of God, no matter what the color of their skin might be, or what they might possess. God is the father of all men! Who then has given men the right to own other human beings? There are people in England who want us to be freed. The Baptist church wants all slaves to be freed. So let us then unite together in this strike. No pay; no work! No pay; no work!

The crowd erupts again.

CROWD

(chanting repeatedly)
No pay; no work! No pay; no work!

Sharp gives them time to settle down, then continues.

SHARPE

Brothers and sisters, there is one more thing I have to say. I want this to be a peaceful strike; I do not want you to resort to violence, because we cannot beat them that way. They have the guns, they have the soldiers, and they have the battleships. We do not have many guns among us, and we do not have any military training, so I do not want us to fight. We have however, what they do not have -- we have the manpower. Ripe canes must be cut quickly, and if the cane is not cut by January, the entire crop will spoil. So if they do not decide to pay us, then we will not cut any cane.

Two YOUTHS standing close by, are definitely not pleased with what Sharp is saying.

YOUTH #1

What's Sharpe talking about? Death to all oppressors!

YOUTH #2

Yes. Death the white oppressors!

Others beside them begin to shout at the top of their voices: DEATH TO THE WHITE OPPRESSORS! DEATH TO THE WHITE OPPRESSORS!

Danso, in solidarity, steps forward, pulls his gun from its holster, fires three shots into the air. Those in the crowd who have guns, do likewise. We see the frustration on Sharpe's faces as he steps down from the podium.

Adisa forces his way through the now boisterous crowd, and makes his way across to Sam Sharpe.

ADISA

Mr. Sharpe.

SHARPE

Hi, brother. Are you a stranger around these parts?

ADTSA

Yes. I'm Adisa Ashanti. I'm here with my brothers. We're wealthy businessmen from the parish of St. Ann, and have heard what you've been doing. We decided that we would ride down and give some financial support for the Struggle.

Adisa takes out the envelope and places it in Sharpe's hand.

SHARPE

Thank you, brother. May the Good Lord give you your due reward.

DECEMBER 27, 1831

INT. KENSINGTON ESTATE GREAT HOUSE - NIGHT

The dining room is full of guests. An oversized, expensive chandelier, hanging down from ceiling, illuminates the entire room. The large banquet style table is loaded with all sorts of meats and other Christmas delicacies. Estate owner, KENSINGTON, his family, and guests, gorge themselves. Four beautiful young lack girls, late teens, serve the table. Kensington, balding, overweight, in full view of his wife, who is thin, pale looking, pushes his hand under the skirt of one of the girls, as she walks around and serves. His comrades laugh, nod their heads in approval, as they partake in their extravagant post Christmas feast.

EXT. KENSINGTON ESTATE GROUNDS - NIGHT

On the porch outside, on the top of the building, and parading the grounds, we see several militiamen, armed with rifles, some drinking rum.

The slaves emerge silently out of the darkness, and descend upon the estate ground in their numbers. Well organized, they split themselves into groups, and spread out all over the grounds. A few have guns, but the majority are armed with cutlasses and clubs. Danso, revolver in his hand, rushes out from among his brothers and joins the charge.

INTERCUT: GREAT HOUSE/ESTATE GROUNDS

GREAT HOUSE

Unaware that things are about to change very quickly, Kensington and his guests continue to gorge themselves. Kensington stands to his feet, wine glass in hand, and addresses the group.

KENSINGTON

This has been a great year for us, my friends. We will not let this strike thwart our festive spirit. How long can they strike for? When they get hungry they'll be glad to come back to work.

VOICE FROM TABLE (O.S.) That's true. This damn talk about emancipation is getting to their stupid heads.

KENSINGTON

And all this talk about rebellion. Rubbish. But just as a precaution, I have a number of well-armed militiamen on guard outside. We'll crush them like cockroaches.

VOICE FROM TABLE (O.S.) I sure wouldn't worry about that.

KENSINGTON

Come on gentlemen, let's drink to our heath, and to an even more prosperous 1832.

ESTATE GROUNDS

144 .

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. SCREAMING. YELLING. Danso, on horseback, revolver in hand, charges forward, fires, takes out one militiaman, then another. The militiamen respond with guns blazing, a couple of slaves go down. The charge intensifies, all the militiamen are quickly cut down. A group of slaves advance towards the great house, and burst into the dining room. Piercing SCREAMS send chills to the bone, as the angry slaves brutally slaughter everyone in sight. The dining room floor is soon washing with blood, as Kensington, his wife, his guests, his children, and even the house slaves, lie dead on the floor. Another group sets the great house is set on fire, it quickly burns to the ground.

Others charge into the cane fields with flaming torches. The night sky is soon illuminated, as acres and acres of sugar cane go up in flames. The victory shout is tumultuous.

Adisa and Kamau stand in the shadows, watching in awe as the events of the night unfolded themselves before their eyes.

ADISA

This is a decisive moment in history.

KAMAU

Shouldn't we go check on Danso -- just to make sure he's okay?

ADISA

Danso can take care of himself. Let him be.

Another tumultuous roar erupts. Someone has located the wine cellar, which miraculously, is still largely intact after the blaze. Loud shouting, dancing, and singing ensue, as they pass around the bottles, and drink their fill of their master's expensive wine.

The destruction is quick and concise, by early night the entire estate is completely burnt to the ground. The slaves continue to celebrate with loud shouts of triumph. Those who have firearms, constantly fire their weapons in the air.

COUPLE OF DAYS LATER

MONTAGE - AFTERMATH OF REBELLION

- -- The soldiers come marching in, hundreds of them.
- --The brothers retreat into the bushes, and watch the proceedings from there.
- --Chaos and pandemonium reigns, as the soldiers go around, firing their rifles randomly, murdering blacks on sight.

- --Black bodies litter the ground, literally hundreds of them.
- --Blacks are arrested in droves, dozens are hanged.
- --Sam sharp is arrested, and led through the town square with his hands tied behind his back.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BUSHES - DAY

The brothers hide behind some thick shrubs. Their horses graze close by.

ADISA

We've paid a heavy price for freedom.

KAMAU

Not much more we can do here. We should get going now.

DANSO

Yeah, but we'll have to wait until night. Too many soldiers around.

Suddenly, loud SHOUTING. A group of soldiers chase two black youths, pretty close to where the brothers are hiding.

Both youths are unharmed, but they are brutally shot down. Danso pulls his revolver, and lunges forward to challenge the soldiers. Adisa and Kamau, reacting quickly, grabs Danso, knocks him down to the ground, and wrestles the weapon out of his hand. The scuffle attracts the attention of the soldiers. Instantly, six soldiers come running towards them, SCREAMING.

Adisa and Kamau in one swift action, drag Danso to his feet and fling him up on his horse. Moving at the speed of greased lightning they jumped on theirs and ride off like the devil. Six rifles blaze behind them.

Safely out of the range of the rife fire, they slow down, Adisa looks at his right arm - it's soaking wet with blood.

INT. PUB - DAY

The pub is crowded. Adisa and Barrett have a drink while they go through the newspaper.

BARRETT

They're hanging Sharpe tomorrow.

A real martyr for the Struggle. I'm glad I got the chance to meet the brother.

BARRETT

You are a hero also, you got shot.

ADISA

That was only a flesh wound -- many paid the ultimate price.

BARRETT

They say that over 500 blacks have been killed.

ADISA

The sacrifice was great, but things will never be the same again.

BARRETT

True, this will only add fuel to the anti slavery movement.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danso stumbles in, singing drunkenly, throws himself down on the sofa. Adisa comes out to him.

DANSO

Why aren't you in bed with your wife?

ADISA

Danso, what the hell do you think you're doing?

DANSO

What are you talking about?

ADISA

You know damn well that I'm talking about that half white woman you keep bringing into this house!

DANSO

What about her? What does this have to do with you?

ADISA

She's another man's wife.

DANSO

Why don't you mind your own damn business!

ADISA

Because it's not healthy to mess around with white people's property, man!

DANSO

She doesn't love the white man -- it's me she wants.

ADTSA

You're so drunk you can't even stand upright. You're sinking, man.

DANSO

I'm outta here, man!

Danso drags himself out of the living room, but trips and falls down the steps, yelling loudly. Adisa and Kamau run outside, drag him back inside, and dump on the sofa. Danso is out cold.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adisa stands by the window, staring out into the darkness. Pearl pushes the door and walks in.

ADISA

I'm really worried about Danso.
Just last month he was involved in
a drunken brawl with some white
boys. They beat him up and left him
for dead.

PEARL

I know how you feel abut him, Adisa.

ADISA

He's my brother -- I love him. I don't want to see him destroy himself.

PEARL

There's not much that you can do for him now, you've done all you can. He's a grown man -- he'll just have to learn from his mistakes.

I guess he'll just have to.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Adisa sits in the living room, and watches MARY, twenty-five, Mulatto, cute, as she creeps out of Danso's bedroom. Danso, drunk from the night before, is snoring heavily in his room.

ADISA

Mary! What are you doing here?

Mary jumps, turns around, startled.

MARY

I-I- well -- well I -

ADISA

You are a married woman! Why don't you leave my brother alone?

MARY

I-I love him.

ADISA

You have your husband.

MARY

He doesn't love me -- he-he abuses me. Danso loves me.

Danso stumbles out of the bedroom.

DANSO

Adisa, why don't you leave us alone?

ADISA

This is wrong! You and Mary must stop seeing each other!

DANSO

Well, it's kinda too late for that -- Mary's pregnant!

ADISA

What! You got another man's wife pregnant?

DANSO

Hey, look who's talking.

My situation was different.

DANSO

Come on, Mary, let's get the hell outta here.

Danso grabs Mary's hand and drags her out through the door.

EXT. YARD - IN FRONT OF STABLES - MORNING

We hear a commotion in the yard. Danso is enraged. Lukie and a couple of the workers try to calm him down, but it's no use. Danso rushes inside, quickly rushes back outside, revolver in his hand. Adisa rushes out of the house.

ADISA

What's the problem, Lukie?

LUKIE

Mary's husband beat her up real bad last night. Claims the baby wasn't his. One of the stupid workers brought the news to your brother.

Danso pulls one of the workers from off a horse, spins the horse wildly around in the yard, then jumps up.

DANSO

I'm going to kill that dirty red face bastard!

Adisa runs across and grabs the reins of the horse.

ADTSA

Don't be an idiot, Danso!

Without warning, Danso rams his fist into the side of Adisa's face, knocking him down to the ground. Danso gallops off like a mad man. Adisa jumps up to his feet.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Get me a horse! Quick!

Someone rushes a horse to him. He swiftly mounts the beast and charges off behind Danso. Kamau and Bomani rush outside, jump on horses also, gallop off right behind Adisa.

Pearl and Abena stand in the doorway, their hands clasped over their mouths, discerning that the worst is yet to come.

They ride behind Danso along the dusty country road at full gallop, but are unable to reduce the distance between them and him.

They are now on the outskirts of the town. Danso pulls out his revolver charges in through an open gate. Danso charges up towards the house, shouting loudly, waving his revolver wildly.

The CRACK of a single gunshot echoes across the open grounds. Danso is flung backwards from off his horse. Adisa and the others rush up to where he is fallen. They jump down from their horses. Danso lies motionless on the ground, blood oozes out in torrents from a large wound in his chest. His hand still clutches the revolver.

Adisa grabs up Danso in his arms. The front of his shirt is quickly soaking with his brother's blood.

ADISA (CONT'D)
Why, Danso? Why -- why -- why, man?
Why wouldn't you listen?

A WHITE MAN runs out with a rifle in his hands.

WHITEMAN

Get off my property at once, or I'll kill all three of you right now! And I really don't care how popular you Ashanti boys might be around here!

ADISA

You might as well start shooting right now, because I'm not leaving my brother here!

Ignoring the man's threats, Adisa kneels down beside his wounded brother. Danso is still breathing. He lifts up his head slightly. Kamau retrieves his weapon.

DANSO

I'm sorry -- sorry -- sorry. I've -I've let down all of you--

He draws his last breath in Adisa's arm. His head falls backwards, and dangles lifelessly.

They lift up Danso's lifeless body, place it on his horse, and ties it securely. They mount their horses and ride slowly off the man's property, as he stands looking on with his rifle in hand.

EXT. ASHANTI PROPERTY - DAY

As they ride in through the gate, Abena and Pearl rush out to meet them. They see Danso's dead body tied to his horse. They both go down on their knees, and begin to weep loudly. Upena stands by the front door and watches. The workers come running in from the pastures, appalled at the sight of Adisa's bloody shirt and Danso's dead body. Lukie rushes across to Adisa.

TJUKTE

I-I'm so sorry, Mr. Ashanti. I-I tried to stop him, sir.

ADISA

I know you tried your best, Lukie.

Adana and Bomani runs out of the house, Adana begins to WAIL at the top of her voice.

ADISA (CONT'D)

Lukie, take care of the womenfolk.

LUKIE

Yes, sir.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - DAY

Amid the rich singing of popular Negro Spirituals, Adisa watches with tears in his eyes, as Danso's body is laid into the ground under a large poinsettia tree. The preacher brings the service to a conclusion, and Mary walks across to him, with her young child in her hand.

MARY

Sir, I-I'm really sorry, it-it's
all my fault.

ADISA

We can't undo what has already been done.

MARY

I-I didn't know it would end up like this.

ADISA

So how did you expect it to end? You leave your matrimonial bed and end up in another man's bed, and now you're expressing surprise at what has happened! MARY

I-I don't-don't know what I'm going to do now, sir.

ADISA

So why are you telling me this?

MARY

I won't be able to keep this child, sir. My-my husband -- he has thrown me out.

ADISA

Give the child to my wife -- he's member of the Ashanti family, and as long as I have breath in my body, I will not allow an Ashanti to suffer.

MARY

Thank you, sir.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adisa stands by the window, tears streaming down his face. Pearl walks in with Danso's son in her hands. She places the baby down, comes across to Adisa, places both arms around him.

ADISA

Why, why, why?

PEARL

Only God knows the reason why. Only God knows.

ADISA

I miss my brother so much. Together, we overcame all the obstacles. Together, we accomplished the impossible. Why couldn't he just hang around?

PEARL

God knew why he took him, Adisa.

Pearl holds him close to her, comforting him as he weeps like a child. Upena, walks slowly across to the parents and places his arms around them.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PUB - DAY

Adisa walks into the pub. Barrett rushes across to meet him, excited.

BARRETT

Ashanti, check this out!

Barrett tosses the newspaper to Adisa. The headlines read: EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION SIGNED.

ADISA

Good God!!

(reads aloud)

Come August 1, 1834, the Emancipation of slavery in Jamaica will begin its first phase. Slaves will be required to do four years of apprenticeship with their former masters. The slaves will no longer to be called slaves, but will to be referred to as apprentices, and special magistrates will put in place to monitor the workings of the apprenticeship system. The masters, on their side, will be required to continue to provide food, or in place of food, grounds on which the apprentices can grow crops to feed themselves. They are also required to provide clothing, lodging, and medical attention.

BARRETT

This is ridiculous! It isn't going to work.

ADISA

It's a start, Barrett -- a start.

EXT. SMITHSON PLANTATION GROUNDS - DAY

The estate is in ruins, overrun by shrubs with bushes. Adisa sits in the front of the carriage with lawyer, FRED THOMAS, mid fifties, white, and stares around in amazement as they drive through the estate grounds.

THOMAS

Here we are, Mr. Ashanti, the infamous Smithson's Plantation. Five hundred and fifty odd acres of prime Jamaican real estate. What do you think, Mr. Ashanti?

Sure looks in bad shape.

THOMAS

It doesn't look like much now, but I can assure you that this property has great potential. This is excellent cattle land.

They are now in the vicinity of the great house. It's sure a far cry from its glory days, and badly needs refurbishing.

Adisa stares up at the great house, pensive, silent.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Something wrong, Mr. Ashanti?

ADISA

No, no. I guess I'm just treading on some old familiar turf.

THOMAS

I don't understand, Mr. Ashanti -- are you saying that you are familiar with this property?

ADISA

More than you would ever understand, Mr. Thomas -- more than you'd ever understand. I'll buy.

THOMAS

Good, man! You wont regret it.

INT. IN FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Adisa rides up, dismounts. Pearl rushes out to meet him.

ADISA

Guess what, Honey?

With a huge smile on his face, he places his arms around her, and lifts her off the ground.

PEARL

I can't guess, but I know it's very good news, because your face is giving it all away.

ADISA

Just make one little teeny guess.

PEARL

You've been elected town mayor? Tell me, Adisa -- I can't guess.

ADISA

We have just acquired the old Smithson plantation.

Pearl gasps, forces herself out of his arms, stands staring at him with her eyes wide open, flabbergasted.

PEARL

You -- we -- the-the Smithson plantation? Are you serious about this, Adisa?

ADISA

(smiling broadly)
As serious as a judge. Five hundred
and fifty odd acres of fine
Jamaican real estate.

He places his arms around her and lifts her off the ground again.

INT. NEW ASHANTI PROPERTY - DAY

Adisa steps out of his office and is about to mount his horse when he sees a carriage coming up the road towards him. The carriage stops beside him. The driver jumps down, opens the door, and out steps Kamilah, elegantly dressed. There are a few strands of grey in her hair, but she's still as beautiful as ever. Flabbergasted and speechless, Adisa just stands there staring at her with his mouth wide open.

KAMILAH

Adisa! I just had to find you. Been reading so much about you.

ADISA

Ka-Kamilah!

Adisa rush over to her, they embrace tightly.

KAMILAH

You have created history, and I have a writer from England who wants to tell your story.

ADISA

Kamilah -- how did - how did -You've done well yourself, look at
you.

KAMILAH

I was lucky -- I married into wealth. I only spent one year in slavery. But look what you have done against enormous odds. This is the stuff that legends are made of.

ADISA

Let's go up to the great house, I want you to meet my family.

FADE TO:

INT. ADISA'S OFFICE - DAY

The journalist pulls up his chair in front of Adisa, pen and paper in hand.

ADISA

Before you begin, I want you know that I want this story dedicated to my brother, Danso Ashanti.

WRITER

No problem Mr. Ashanti. Where do we begin?

ADISA

The year was 1807. I was on my father's property in the country of Ghana, off the coast of West Africa, tending to my little herd of goats, when I saw them coming...

FADE OUT.