

Pond

by Mark Lyons

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FADE IN:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Cheap huts line one side of the road, woods on the other.

WHITE GUARDS corral several groups of chained BLACK CREOLES into caravans along the road.

Most of the Creoles are young and healthy. There's very few elders.

One GUARD walks by ARMAND, a 20's male, and ETIENNE, a 30's female. Both are very dark skinned.

The guard checks to make sure their chains are snug.

ARMAND

We've lived here for over seventy years. You have no right to up and move us.

The guard stands straight and looks Armand in the eye.

GUARD

It'd be a good idea to keep those thick lips shut here on out.

The guard walks off to inspect more chains.

MARGARET, a young white woman in a frilly pink flower-print dress, walks by. She eyes the black people.

ETIENNE

Wha'shoo doin' here, little flowery girl? Ki l'aj to gain?

MARGARET

Speak English to me.

ARMAND

She asks how old you are.

MARGARET

I'm seventeen. And don't call me flowery. You won't speak to me or my father that way.

Etienne gestures to the dozens of people around her.

ETIENNE

Your fatha really need the lot of us for his slavin'?

MARGARET

Don't be stupid, woman. You'll stay with us until you're trained proper. Then you'll be auctioned on the fairgrounds.

ETIENNE

Pretty girl like you should be home
wich yo' motha.

MARGARET

My mother has passed. You'll be
wise not to speak of her again.

ARMAND

Pay no mind to her, flowery girl.
The old mind leaves at her age.

MARGARET

I said don't call me flowery.

ETIENNE

Then do not wear flowery dresses.

Margaret eyes them.

MARGARET

And what do you mean old? She
can't be forty yet.

ARMAND

So it looks on her face and body,
but she just celebrate her hundred
and eight birthday not even two
months ago.

Margaret looks the woman up and down.

ARMAND

That is what truly upsets us. De
white folk like you are taking us
away from our longevity.

MARGARET

I don't understand.

ARMAND

Myself, I'm near ninety-four
year-old.

Armand motions into the woods on the other side of the road.

ARMAND

You take us away from our pond, we
can no longer sustain the young
tissue.

ETIENNE

Armand!

Margaret looks into the woods Armand refers to.

MARGARET

Pond? You mean-

ARMAND

What de explorers have searched for for hundreds of years over, we've created in our own back yard.

MARGARET

I don't believe you.

ARMAND

Look around, flowery girl.

Margaret does.

ARMAND

Why are there but only a few elders here? Because they are the ones who would not drink from it. They wouldn't bathe in it. They wanted to age and die naturally.

She looks at him skeptically. Etienne looks at him angrily.

ARMAND

Imagine never losing the softness of the skin on your cheek. Never losing the firmness in your hips. Not having to become stout after childbirth.

Margaret becomes aware of Armand's eyes on her body and she pulls her shoulders back so her chest sticks out more.

MARGARET

Where?

Armand again motions to the woods.

ARMAND

Lala. Through the tr-

ETIENNE

Armand! No!

MARGARET

Let him speak, old woman!

Margaret lets Armand finish.

ARMAND

There, through the trees, and past the stones.

Margaret looks.

ARMAND

For seventy years we've drank and washed in that water. And look at us.

Margaret looks at the sweat glisten on his body.

ARMAND

A century old and flesh like new.
Muscles like oxes.

ETIENNE

Do not listen, child.

ARMAND

She doesn't want you to discover
the powers to your advantage.

MARGARET

Silence now! Both of you.
There'll be no more words.

Margaret trails off to the front of one of the caravans.

She looks around to make sure none of the guards are
watching her.

She takes a blanket off a wooden seat of the caravan and
tucks it under an arm.

She casually strolls off through the trees.

Etienne turns to Armand.

ETIENNE

Wha'shoo go tell her that for,
fool!?

EXT. TOMB YARD - DAY

Margaret hurries past stone graves and towards a pond down a
slight hill.

ETIENNE (V.O.)

We were going to let the disease
die in that water.

At the water's edge, Margaret pulls her dress off and only
wears her undergarments.

ETIENNE (V.O.)

You've seen the virus in that pond
infect our mothas and fathas.

Margaret steps into the water and slowly immerses herself.

ETIENNE (V.O.)

You've seen them spread it to each
other with their fluids.

Margaret cups her hands and drinks the water.

ETIENNE (V.O.)

You've seen the water rot our
parents' blood. You've seen the
deficiencies. You know no one is
immune.

Margaret swims in the water.

ETIENNE (V.O.)

You know the disease must not get
out of that water hole!

ARMAND (V.O.)

If the young girl keeps her loins
to herself, it will be contained.

Margaret steps out of the water and dries off with the
blanket. She slides her flowery dress back on.

ARMAND (V.O.)

If she spreads it to the other
white people through her fluids,
they deserve the lesions and the
waxy blisters.

ETIENNE (V.O.)

That is not fair to de other
people. They do not deserve that
disease in their blood.

Margaret walks back through the grave stones and woods.

ARMAND (V.O.)

What they are doing to us is not
fair.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Armand and Etienne watch Margaret walk past them to the
caravan she got the blanket from.

Armand smiles at her wet hair.

ARMAND

(under his breath)

Toutswit. Swinn-twa.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PLANTATION FIELD - DAY

Hot. Armand sweats and bails hay by himself.

Other black Creoles from his village harvest cotton way out
in the field, watched by guards.

He doesn't see Margaret approach behind him.

MARGARET

You've learned to use the tools
very well over the weeks.

Armand turns to her.

ARMAND

'Shoo doin' here, flowery girl?

Margaret stares him in the eyes.

MARGARET

I'm going to let you call me names,
today.

She walks over closer to him and grabs at the front of his
trousers.

MARGARET

In fact, today, you can speak to me
however you want.

He backs away from her clutch.

ARMAND

'Shoo doin'? Don't do that!

She looks at him, threatening.

MARGARET

If you don't do what I want you to
do...

Margaret lifts her dress up with one hand to reveal her
cotton panties beneath.

MARGARET

I will start screaming right now
and they'll be at my side like
that.

With her other hand, she snaps her fingers.

MARGARET

And don't think for even a second
that they need proof to shoot you
for raping a little white girl.

Margaret gets down on her knees so her mouth is equal height
to his groin.

MARGARET

Now walk to me.

Armand looks at her open mouth and her hiked dress.

CUT TO BLACK.