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COMMANDER GREER

Moses. Yes. I will remember.

He salutes her and with his men, turns and marches back to camp. Harriet walks past Nelson into the woods. She turns back to him.

HARRIET

You coming or what?

Nelson follows her, amazed.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Harriet and Nelson finish off a roasted rabbit. Nelson leans back.

Start

NELSON

Sweet ain't it?

HARRIET

The rabbit?

NELSON

Freedom.

Harriet grunts.

HARRIET

Even here between two sets of white men with cannons. Least if I die I go owning my own death. Not owing nobody nothing.

NELSON

You got family still slaves?

Harriet shakes her head.

HARRIET

Got everybody out. My parents was last. My ma, when I came for her, wouldn't leave her mattress ticking. Said she'd worked too long and hard on making it. Had to drag the full mattress along with her and Pa all the way to Canada.

Nelson laughs.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

You got family still under?

Nelson's smile fades.

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NELSON

Got sold off when I was little. Had a sister, but I ain't seen her in over fifteen years. Don't know where she is.

Harriet's voice softens.

HARRIET

If she ain't free yet, she will be. I can promise you that.

NELSON

You got sisters? Brothers?

HARRIET

Both. Got 'em all to New York, and won't one of 'em speak to me.

NELSON

Why not?

HARRIET

My sister's mad 'cause I pulled a gun on her when she tried to turn back. I'da shot her, too, and she knows it.

NELSON

And your brothers?

HARRIET

Got 'em out on Christmas. Perfect time-whole white family busy lookin' somewhere else. I get 'em right to the point of steppin' off and Benny, that's my oldest one, says he wants to go say goodbye to our Ma. Now I know that cain't happen cause then Ma'll get to weepin' and give the whole plan away - so I says no. They fought me, oh they fought me, so finally I says, alright, I'll let you see Ma, but you cain't say nothin' to her. We creep around to where Ma is cookin' and we watch through a crack in the wood while she's askin' my Pa over and over where her children are. My heart like to have crashed right through my chest, and tears start streaming down my brothers' faces. I told 'em both, they can go to they mama, or go to they freedom. They chose freedom, but ain't neither one of 'em spoke to me since.

Harriet breaks off abruptly, a catch in her voice.

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HARRIET (CONT'D)

I guess this work makes me kind of a monster.

Nelson studies her in the firelight.

NELSON

Sometimes a monster's what you need.

Harriet stands abruptly and walks into the woods.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Where you going?

HARRIET

I'll be back. You stay here. **END**

She disappears. Nelson pokes the fire.

EXT. STREAM IN THE WOODS - NIGHT

Harriet slips nude into the rippling black waters, and glides in slow graceful strokes across the water's surface.

NELSON'S POV

Nelson climbs quietly up on a ledge above the stream. He remains still, watching Harriet's silhouette as she leaves the water, climbs up on a rock and sits there, looking up at the moon. Water glistens on her back. Nelson breathes deep.

NELSON (WHISPERING)

You ain't no monster, Moses. No Ma'am.
Not at all.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS' STUDY - DAY

Douglass sits at a modest desk. Newspapers lay across the desk with headlines reading "GRANT VICTORIOUS AT SHILOH", and "STONEWALL JACKSON CLAIMS BLOODY VICTORY." "UNION TROOPS DEVASTATED". Douglass sighs and rubs his eyes. He spies a letter among his mail, and opens it. His face spreads in a delighted smile.

HARRIET (V.O.)

Hello there Frederick. I'm writing you on account of one of my boys, Mr. Nelson Davis, knows how to read and write. He also reads your letters to me whenever I want. Your words always feel good.