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CONTINUED:

HARRIET

There's been a lot of peoples, son. If I
done what you say, then I'm glad.

She starts to move on when Nelson's three friends join them.

NELSON

Cordell, Bango, Big George,- this here's
Moses. The Moses.

They all take off their hats and bow in respect to Harriet.

CORDELL

It's an honor to meet you, Ma'am.

NELSON

We been tryin' to sign up, but they won't
take us. Say it's a white man's army. But
it ain't just a white man's war, Moses.
People say this war could put an end to
slavery. What kind of men are we to just
let them fight our battles for us?

The men grumble agreement. Harriet studies their faces.

HARRIET

How bad yall want to help the North?

NELSON

Bad as I need to eat or breathe.

Harriet locks into his eyes, then sweeps the others.

HARRIET

Remember you said that.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

The boys sit with Harriet in a wooded grove. Harriet lectures
and they lean on Moses' every word.

START

HARRIET

Most them southern boys in the
Confederacy bringin' their slaves to war
right 'longside 'em. They'll dig the
trenches, bury the dead, cook the food,
dig the latrines - same 'ol stuff like on
the plantation, 'cept there ain't gon be
no overseer.

BANGO

There ain't?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORDELL

How there gon' be a overseer, man?
Everybody too busy fightin'.

HARRIET

That's right. Slaves do what they do
'cause they don't have no better choice.
They run, the rebs'll shoot 'em. Johnny
Reb got no time for a worrisome slave.
Slaves too easy to replace. Fresh ones
comin' in all the time.

NELSON

So, nobody's really keepin' count?

HARRIET

Not enough to keep us from goin' in,
workin' as slaves, and carrying whatever
news we hear right back 'cross to the
Union.

BIG GEORGE

You mean we gon' spy for the Union?

HARRIET

Who's better fit for it than us? Don't
nobody pay attention to slaves. Don't
nobody mind what they say around poor
dumb niggas. We can get in, get
information, then when we leave we take
as many colored with us as we can.

Nelson leaps into the air.

NELSON

Let's go! Let's do it! I'm ready, Moses!

HARRIET

Sit down, son.

NELSON

Why wait? We could leave tonight! I'm
ready to--

HARRIET

You ain't ready till you can fast five
days without gettin' weak, carry twice
your own weight while you run for your
life, and prove to me that you can follow
my orders without no pause or question.

She takes her knife from its sheath and lets it fly, spearing
a falling leaf against a tree. The boys blink.

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HARRIET (CONT'D)
I don't handle questions.

She stands and starts walking away.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
Any yall man enough to follow me, come on.

The boys watch her leave, then one by one get to their feet to follow. Nelson shakes his head as he joins in.

NELSON
Damn, she's tough. *J End*

EXT. CLEARING IN THE WOODS - DAY

A HUGE BRANCH pushes up into frame, followed by a man's pained grunt. Harriet's boys lay on their backs, using tree limbs as dumbbells, lifting as sweat pours. Harriet stands over them.

HARRIET
Think of it as a rock. Rock's in front of a cave. Cave is your only hiding place, and the 'rollers are movin' in. You gonna stop and say it's heavy? I don't reckon you will.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEEP HILLSIDE - DAY

Harriet's boys attempt to run full speed up the incredibly steep hill, carrying thick, heavy logs. One by one they fall back, stumble, drop the logs and start again. Harriet calls from on top of the hill.

HARRIET
That's your Papa you carryin'. That's a man that cain't walk 'cause his feet is froze from workin' all his life with nothin' on 'em. That's your mama you carryin'. She been a slave all her life and lookin' to you to get her free. Do not drop her! Pick her up! Pick up your mama!

Nelson struggles triumphantly to the top.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
Good. Go again.