

The City of Music

Written by

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Based on True Story

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EXT. FIELD - DAY

Title. 1884

A large group of people are working in a field picking cotton.

Singing a spiritual, groups are pulling large bags. Others are taking the full bags and dumping them into a wire sided wagon.

Three young black girls are working together. DOLLIE, WINNIE, and HARRIET.

Working a row they are on the opposite sides with 5 others.

The three girls are all about the same age 10-12. Wearing rags.

DOLLIE

Girl, you'd better hurry up.

HARRIET

Something's wrong. I threw up this morning and I am having so much trouble walking.

Winnie

Open your bag. Dollie, when old Miss Lossie ain't looking we'll fill it up for ya.

DOLLIE

Yeah, just rest and pretend your picking.

The girls start to throw cotton into Harriet's bag. One or two into theirs and one or two into hers.

Like kids they start to make a game out of it.

When they miss, Harriet picks up the cotton and throws it in.

She begins to smile.

The older slaves seeing this shake their heads but don't say anything.

WINNIE

Don't look, don't look, old Miss Lossie is looking.

Turning both girls look at a middle age heavy set black woman who is definitely in charge. OLD MISS LOSSIE

WINNIE (CONT'D)
I told y'all not to look.

Old Miss Lossie walks over to them.

OLD MISS LOSSIE
What mischief are y'all young ones
up too?

All in unison.

	WINNIE		DOLLIE
Nothing.		Nothing.	

HARRIET
(Grimacing)
Nothing.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
I just feel real bad.

OLD MISS LOSSIE
You're just lazy. Why look at you,
none of y'all even filled 5 bags
this morning. Lazy.

DOLLIE
No ma'am we've been working very
hard.

WINNIE
We all are.

HARRIET
I need to use the latrine ma'am.

OLD MISS LOSSIE
You'll do no such thing. If you
need to go, you go right here. And
you other two, I should get my whip
for your smart mouths.

Harriet falls over in a crouching position. She begins to cry
and gas is heard being expelled.

OLD MISS LOSSIE (CONT'D)
You don't mess yourself. We don't
need to be smelling you and your
dirty dress.

Harriet continues to cry and Miss Lossie picks her up roughly
by one arm revealing diarrhea swirled with blood and worms
writhing in it.

OLD MISS LOSSIE (CONT'D)
 My goodness. Not only are you lazy
 but now you're full of worms. Come
 on its off to the smokehouse for
 you.

HARRIET
 No ma'am. If I could just rest in
 the shade for a little while and
 get a drink of water I know I'd be
 fine.

OLD MISS LOSSIE
 (Slowly)
 REST IN THE SHADE. WITH A DRINK OF
 WATER? Oh my, maybe sleep in the
 big house, on a bed. No you're
 gonna hang on a hook all night long
 and see if the smoke will kill them
 worms.

DOLLIE
 Miss Lossie, maybe just a drink and
 she will be fine?

OLD MISS LOSSIE
 You wanna hang with her? Get back
 to work. One more word and you'll
 be on a hook next to her.

Tears begin to well up in Dollie and Winnie's eyes as they
 realize this is the last time they will see their friend.
 They begin to get back to work.

Miss Lossie stops still holding Harriet. Harriet looks back
 at her friends with the knowledge that she will not survive
 the night.

Thunder is heard in the background. It is what Miss Lossie
 had heard.

The singing stops as all heads turn towards the sound.

DOLLIE
 Winnie is that thunder?

A older man working on the same row.

SLAVE
 No, that's something else.

Old Miss Lossie walks off the field. The workers go back to
 their jobs. The girls continue with no joy at all. Someone
 picks up Harriet's small bag and carries it to the big wagon.

The thunder has six quick explosions with some, now heard, smaller gun fire.

INT. SLAVE QUARTERS - MORNING

Dollie wakes up and stretches. She looks to her right and over a empty bed she see's Winnie looking at her.

WINNIE

She didn't come back yesterday.

A loud explosion happens right outside of the room.

Running through the door a older black boy enters.

SLAVE 2

We got to get out of here.

WINNIE

What's happening?

Both girls get out of bed and throwing on their clothes.

SLAVE 2

I don't know. It's just crazy out there.

Running down a hall.

SLAVE 2 (CONT'D)

I got up and saw a bunch of men in grey hiding all over the yard. Then these other guys in blue came up the road and they both started shooting at each other.

Another cannon explosion.

As they get to the door Miss Lossie comes barging in.

Looking at the boy.

OLD MISS LOSSIE

You take these kids to the root cellar and lock them in.

DOLLIE

I don't want to,,,

She is interrupted by a slap across the face.

OLD MISS LOSSIE
Shut up. These are Union soldiers
out there. If they find you they
will skin you, and boil you, and
eat you alive. Is that what you
want?

Both girls shake their heads.

SLAVE 2
Come, follow me, stay low.

EXT. SLAVE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

All three exit and run to the side. Shots are being fired but
no one is shooting at them.

They come to some barrels and chairs and pause.

DOLLIE
Do you know what happened to
Harriet?

SLAVE 2
She didn't make it.

WINNIE
Her body?

SLAVE 2
Knowing Old Miss Lossie she cut her
up and fed her to the pigs.

A shot hits the side of the building behind them. Before they
have time to react.

SLAVE 2 (CONT'D)
Now's our chance. Come on RUN!

All three tear off across the yard diving behind a horse
trough on the other side.

The boy rolls on his side and unlocks and opens the root
cellar. Motioning to the girls they run over and jump in.

INT. ROOT CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

It is full of insects and you see a rat run and hide.

SLAVE 2
Do not make a sound.

The girls run in.

More shots.

DOLLIE
Don't lock us...

The door shuts and you hear the lock click.

Gun shots continue.

INT. ROOT CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

A beam of light is shining in on the left side and it moves slowly to the middle.

Gun shots continue.

The girls are huddling together in the dark.

WINNIE
(Whispers)
Dollie, are you touching my hand?

DOLLIE
No.

WINNIE
I have a rat on me.

Both girls squeal and bush their clothes.

Hearing the lock fiddled with the girls look up not knowing what to expect.

The door swings open and light floods in.

UNION SOLDIER
We got some more. How many of you are in there?

DOLLIE
Just us two.

WINNIE
You're not going to eat us?

DOLLIE
Ya we don't taste good.

UNION SOLDIER

Eat you?

(Laughs with his buddy)

No, we are here to free you.

WINNIE

What does that mean?

UNION SOLDIER

It means your life is about to change.

DOLLIE

For the better?

UNION SOLDIER

Well, I suppose that is up to you. Now come on let's get you out of there. Would you like something to drink? We have food over at the mess.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

Exiting the root cellar the girls follow the Soldier.

There are bodies being carried away.

People are helping and walking to a clearing where there seems to be a gathering of people.

There is a group of men in grey on their knees with their hands on their head.

WINNIE

What's a mess?

UNION SOLDIER

It's where we eat. It's also this whole stupid war?

DOLLIE

What's a war?

UNION SOLDIER

It's where people fight over stuff.

DOLLIE

What's y'all fighting over?

UNION SOLDIER

Well, I guess we're fighting over you.

For us? DOLLIE For us? WINNIE

UNION SOLDIER
Yep, now go on over and get in the
line. They're going to check you
out and see if your hurt and feed
you.

Winnie looks over and sees Old Miss Lossie laying with her
legs on the porch and her head on the ground. A gun right by
her hands and a bullet in her head.

Winnie runs over and kicks her slightly in the head.

She doesn't move.

Then she hauls off and kicks her as hard as she can.

She turns and trots back.

UNION SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Why did you do that?

WINNIE
Cause she deserved it.

UNION SOLDIER
But she's dead.

WINNIE
Not dead enough.

Both girls leave the SOLDIER and seeing the boy that put them
in the root cellar in line they walk up behind him.

Dollie grabs his shirt and gives it a pull.

He turns and sees them. They all nod.

Winnie notices something on the other side of the clearing.
Grabbing Dollie she pulls her across the yard.

On a table is a small girl with a blanket on her. Harriet.
Harriet wakes as they approach and gets up on one arm. All
the girls hug and are obviously excited to reunite.

FADE OUT.

INT. TENT - DAY

The three girls are sitting on a bench waiting.

The doctor comes over smiles as he sees their big white eyes.

DOCTOR
Well you all have some problems but
we can treat them. You should be
better in no time.

Turning into the tent

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Nurse.

The nurse a older woman walks over.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
I think all that's left is for my
patients to get a bath and some
clean clothes.

NURSE
Yes Doctor. Would you follow me
please?

The girls get up and follow the nurse to a smaller area.

DOLLIE
(Whispers)
What's a bath?

Both the other girls shake their heads.

WINNIE
At least they're not going to boil
us and eat us.

The nurse pulls back the tent flap as the girls look in at
the steaming tub.

EXT. YARD CONTINUOUS

All the people in the yard look at the medical tent as three
girls scream. Some run over.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

ALMA and GEORGE are in a room preparing bunks. George is
lifting mattresses on one as Alma is smoothing blankets and
sheets on another across the room.

Both are dressed in black and very proper.

Dogs start barking outside.

ALMA
George here they come.

GEORGE
Are you ready for this?

ALMA
No.

George smiles and looks into Alma's eyes. He turns with Alma following they exit the room.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

George and Alma exit the front door. Alma stays on the front porch and George walks to the gate.

This is a typical clapboard, two story house that you see in the South.

There are flowers and bushes along the gate.

A wagon with two men are coming up the road. There is one horse and two dogs running along side.

GEORGE
Peaty, Summer hush up.

Neither dogs listen to him.

The wagon comes to a halt in front of the gate.

The WAGON DRIVER and his assistant seem to be bored to death.

WAGON DRIVER
You the missionaries from Philadelphia?

GEORGE
Yes sir, I guess we are.

WAGON DRIVER
I got three children for you.

GEORGE
Three, I thought there would be more?

WAGON DRIVER
Oh, I am sure there will be. This is the start. You're going to love these uns.

GEORGE

I am sure I am going to love them
all.

WAGON DRIVER

Kids. This is your stop. Come and
meet you new teachers.

One at a time all the kids look over the side of the wagon.
Big white eyes not knowing what to expect.

ALMA

Oh My.

Alma runs off the porch when she sees the kids.

GEORGE

So why's you say I was gonna love
these kids?

WAGON DRIVER

Cause they sang the whole way here.

Looking at the kids.

GEORGE

Good, because with my wife, singing
will be required here. Now, is
anyone hungry?

All the girls nod.

Alma has arrived at the back of the wagon.

ALMA

Girls hand me your things and I'll
help you down.

DOLLIE

We don't have no things ma'am. We
just have us.

Alma looks at her husband. Then helps the girls off the
wagon.

GEORGE

You boys must be thirsty, would you
like to join us for dinner?

Looking at each other.

WAGON DRIVER

We do have to get back but I guess
we can have a quick bite.

GEORGE

My wife has been working on her sweet tea. She has also fixed a big pot of stew.

WAGON DRIVER

Well, now in the south I think there's a law about saying no to sweet tea.

GEORGE

I have to warn you, she is still working on it. It's a bit, real sweet.

WINNIE

I can help you if you'd like I use to make it back at...

Dolly grabs her by the shoulder and shakes her head no real fast to stop her from saying anything else.

ALMA

I was wondering if you girls talked?

WAGON DRIVER

Oh they talk. Just give them a chance.

ALMA

So everyone does talk?

GROUP

Yes ma'am.

Alma and George smile at each other.

They reach the porch and Alma opens the door. The girls go in first.

WAGON DRIVER

There is one other thing.

He lowers his voice as the girls go inside. Alma and George turn towards him

WAGON DRIVER (CONT'D)

I was told to tell you they seem kind of skittish about bath's?

GEORGE

Bath's?

WAGON DRIVER
That's what I was told.

Looking at Alma.

GEORGE
Okay then, come on in gentlemen.

INT. GIRLS BEDROOM - MORNING

There is a knock on the door.

Alma enters the room.

There are three bunk beds against the walls except for the wall with the door on it.

All the girls have taken bottom bunks.

ALMA
(Sings)
Good Morning. Everybody rise and shine.

The kids stir.

Dollie pops out of bed.

DOLLIE
Good morning ma'am.

ALMA
Like I told you yesterday you don't have to call me Ma'am. My name is Mrs. Alma.

DOLLIE
Good morning Mrs. Alma.

ALMA
I don't know if you children are hungry, but I have breakfast down stairs?

All the kids look at each other and as Dollie runs to the door the other two spring out of bed and head to the door.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Slow down. You children will run over each other.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Running into the room the girls sit around the table.

Alma enters and takes a metal pitcher to Winnie.

ALMA

Here you go. Pour yourself some
milk and pass it around. I'll go
get breakfast.

WINNIE

Thank you ma'am I mean Mrs. Alma.

Alma smiles as she leaves the room.

Filling her glass Winnie passes the pitcher.

HARRIET

You think we are going to get
breakfast every morning?

WINNIE

I don't know but I'll take it
today.

In the other room you hear Alma "Jesus Loves Me".

Hearing a familiar song the girls begin to join in. Adding
harmony and color to the tune.

Alma walks back in with a look of joy on her face. Having
singing kids was a surprise she didn't expect.

The kids start clapping and continue singing as Alma puts a
few pancakes on the plates.

Winnie reaches for the butter slops some on and passes it.
Alma puts a couple on her plate and sits to join them as the
singing stops.

ALMA

You children are really talented.
Where did you learn to sing like
that?

DOLLIE

In the fields.

HARRIET

We sang every day as we worked.

WINNIE

So do you and Mr. George own us now?

ALMA

No honey. No one owns you anymore.

DOLLIE

So what are we suppose to do?

ALMA

Well, you are here so Mr. George and I can give you an education.

WINNIE

What's an Ed-u-cation?

ALMA

Education is like a key. A key that can open up the door to your future.

The kids just look at her.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay, lets find out what you children know.

DOLLIE

(Proudly)

I know, nothing.

HARRIET

I'm good for nothing.

WINNIE

I'm stupid.

HARRIET

I am also lazy.

DOLLIE

She really is lazy. It's true.

ALMA

Okay stop, stop.

(Looking up)

Oh Lord, where did this come from?

DOLLIE

Miss Lossie. She was a mean old lady that use to be in charge of us. She use to beat us and call us names.

WINNIE
But she is dead now.

ALMA
Gone to heaven?

DOLLIE
Oh I don't think so.

WINNIE
I don't think she would like it up there. No one to beat up on.

ALMA
You must have dreams?

HARRIET
What cha mean?

ALMA
Something you would like to do in the future.

WINNIE
I want to ride a horse.

The girls laugh.

DOLLIE
You know you ain't never going to ride no horse.

ALMA
No, that's what I mean. When you dream you can do anything.

WINNIE
See, I can ride a horse if I want to.

ALMA
What about you Harriet, what would you like to do in the future?

HARRIET
Well, I know its silly, but, I'd like to someday, kiss a b-o-y.

All the girls giggle.

WINNIE
Ain't no boy gonna kiss a skinny worm filled little girl like you.

HARRIET

She didn't say today. Someday I am gonna be a lady, and pretty too, and I am going to meet a boy and he is gonna want to kiss me.

WINNIE

So dreams are things that are never going to happen?

ALMA

No, dreams are things you want to do in the future and have faith that they will happen.

The girls just look again.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. You set a plan for something you want and work towards it. Dollie there has to be something you want.

DOLLIE

I really just want to sing. It is what I love to do the best.

ALMA

There are people that make a living singing. They are called performers and travel all around the world entertaining people.

DOLLIE

You mean, I could go to Chattanooga or maybe even Kentucky?

ALMA

I'm talking all the way to Paris, or London and even New York.

The girls just look.

ALMA (CONT'D)

They're places far away. Even farther than Kentucky.

DOLLIE

And we get there by education?

ALMA

You sure do. Education is the key.

HARRIET

So how do I get me some education?

ALMA

You mean how do I get educated and what's this about worms?

HARRIET

Yes ma'am, I mean Mrs. Alma. I got me the worms. How do I get me some educated?

ALMA

(Smiling)

Books. We are going to learn to read and write and even do numbers called arithmetic.

DOLLIE

I'm going to write a book?

ALMA

Maybe? I don't know, but I know you can. See humans are funny this way. Animals don't need to be educated. You don't have to teach a bird how to fly or build a nest. You don't have to teach a fish how to swim. But people we have to learn everything. You've seen babies right?

The girls nod.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Well they can't walk or talk or dress themselves. Once even you didn't know how to walk or talk or sing.

The girls are all contemplating this.

ALMA (CONT'D)

And the secret key is books. Women aren't allowed to be Doctors or Lawyers but anyone can read their books. You can have the same education as a Doctor even just as we are.

DOLLIE

Mrs. Alma?

ALMA

Yes.

DOLLIE

Can books teach me to protect
children like us from mean people
like Miss Lossie?

ALMA

Yes, I believe they can. In fact I
can guess that Miss Lossie didn't
read a lot of books.

HARRIET

I don't think she could read at
all.

ALMA

I believe that. Mean people
normally never read, Neither do
trouble makers, criminals, men who
beat their wives, people that lie
and steal. One thing they have in
common is they are kind of dumb.

WINNIE

Does Mr. George read?

ALMA

Let me show you something.

Alma gets up from the table and heads across to a set of
double doors.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

The doors open and walking in, the girls have their mouths
open.

DOLLIE

Wow.

HARRIET

Mr. George has read all these
books?

ALMA

Yes he has. We both have. In fact
he has written a couple of them. So
when you meet a man. Harriet. He
may try to impress you with the
size of this or that. Men try that
sometimes.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

But the only thing that should ever impress you, no matter how cute he is, is the size of his library. A man who reads will always take care of you. He will always treat you right. He will always be good, and most important. If he doesn't know something he will know how to learn it.

WINNIE

So how quick before we have education?

ALMA

Quicker than you think. It's going to take some time, and you will get frustrated, but we learn as much as we can every day and tomorrow we will learn a little more. Fall down and get back up just like walking.

DOLLIE

When can we get started?

ALMA

As soon as we clean and put away the breakfast dishes.

The girls look at each other and bolt out the door into the dining room.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Now lets find a treatment for, the worms.

EXT. MISSIONARY HOUSE - DAY

Title. 1887

The yard is filled with people. A few white adults but mostly blacks are playing in the yard.

A woman we haven't seen before walks out on the porch and clangs a large triangle.

TEACHER

Group one back to class.

The older kids and a couple adults head into a new looking building that wasn't there before.

Once again a wagon is coming down the road.

Mr. George is walking out to meet it.

GEORGE
Morning fella's what cha got for me
today?

WAGON DRIVER
No young uns. Just some mail and
supplies you ordered from town.

George goes out the gate and to the back of the wagon to help
with the supplies.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room has tables and chairs. Mrs. Alma is at the front
standing by a wall with a black chalk board that has been
very used.

Our three girls and definitely older and take the front of
the class.

Four other students fill in and all are carrying books and
some kind of journal.

ALMA
For the rest of today we are going
to talk about making money.

This gets everyone's attention and they all open up their
books to start writing.

ALMA (CONT'D)
There are only six ways to get
money. The first is to marry it.

HARRIET
Now that's my way.

WINNIE
Harriet when you finally get that
boy to kiss do you really want him
to be a sixty year old wrinkly
white Colonel?

Everyone laugh's.

HARRIET
I shutter the thought.

ALMA
If I may continue? The next way is
to inherit it.

A man in the back who is also trying to learn.

OLD MAN

Well that leaves me out.

Everyone laughs again.

ALMA

That leaves me out also. The chickens flown the coop.

Laughter continues.

ALMA (CONT'D)

The next way is to borrow it. Now there isn't anything really wrong with borrowing it as long as it is for a fixed time and a fixed purpose. Let's say Mr. George and I borrowed a couple hundred to build a barn to hold the hay we harvested to sell next year. Then we pay back the loan. There isn't any problem with that. The problem is when you borrow to pay off another loan you made. See you are never gonna get out of a hole that you are still digging in. In fact people around the world become slaves to their debt it is called indentured slavery. That is the reason every religion in the world curses money lenders. They not only say don't do it they literally will curse you if you do.

OLD MAN

Well I was gonna offer anyone a dollar if you pay me back five by next year.

ALMA

That is exactly what I was talking about. If you couldn't pay him back you would have to take out another loan and now you're in the hole you can't get out of.

OLD MAN

After you said I was gonna be cursed I decided to take back my offer.

DOLLIE

You mean people actually chose to become slaves?

ALMA

Yes they do. Not only that but the whole family is involved until their grandchildren forget that there was even a balance to be paid.

DOLLIE

Well that's never going to happen to me.

ALMA

Good choice. Okay, the next way is to steal it. Problem with that way is there are only two futures. Anyone want to guess what they are?

DOLLIE

Dead or in jail.

Laughter but not as much.

ALMA

We all know someone don't we?

The entire class is now somber and nodding in agreement.

ALMA (CONT'D)

The next way is to win it. Trouble is you can get addicted to trying to win, and as soon as you are addicted you will never win again. You can tell when you are getting addicted when you think just on more big win and I'll quit. At that point forget it you are never ever going to get a win big enough to get you to stop. Then you know what most people do? They borrow to try to win.

DOLLIE

Mrs. Alma is there any way to get money then?

ALMA

Yes there is and it's the sixth way. It's the easiest and the hardest.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

Might be the longest or the
shortest, but it is the only
certifiable way to make money...
That is to earn it.

The room groans.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Let me give you something to think
about. Raise your hand, right now
if you have a problem. Any problem.

Every hand in the room is raised.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay now put them down.

All the hands go down.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Thinking about that problem do you
believe that someone else can help
you solve that problem? Raise your
hand if it is a yes.

Every hand goes up again.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay hands down. Did you see?
Everyone of us has a problem and
everyone of us believes someone
else can help us with it. Whether
you are black or white, rich or
poor, fat or skinny every person on
the planet has a problem and every
person on the planet believes
someone else can help them with it.
Now here's the good part. We have
been created to be problem solvers.
That's what we do. The more you
know how to solve problems the more
money you earn and if you can find
out a problem everyone has...

WINNIE

And solve it.

Alma points at Winnie and nods.

DOLLIE

What if you can only do one thing
like sing? How will that solve a
problem?

ALMA

First off, you are not just a singer, period. You are a singer comma. Like I am not a teacher period. I am a teacher comma, wife comma, daughter comma, missionary comma, farmer comma. On and on. You will understand all the things you can do as you grow and continue learning. To get back to your question what if a young man wants to impress his lady. He could take her to a dinner, or he could take her to a dinner and a show. Want to guess who would be at the show?

DOLLIE

A singer.

ALMA

And what about if we went to church and didn't have a choir?

DOLLIE

But the choir doesn't get paid.

ALMA

But the choir director does. Do you think they need to know how to sing?

Dollie nods.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay so we can all agree everyone has a problem and everyone needs someone else to help them solve it and we are all going to continue to learn to be better problem solvers so we can earn a living and not have to borrow, steal, gamble, wait for someone to die, or marry a wrinkly old white guy.

Everyone nods and laughs at this when the door opens and George comes running in.

GEORGE

Excuse me everyone. I need to show this to Mrs. Alma really quick.

He hands her a envelope. She takes the letter out and starts reading.

ALMA

Do you think they're ready?

GEORGE

You're their teacher, do you think they're ready?

ALMA

I would hate to get their hopes up.

GEORGE

What is faith?

She looks up at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Look they know we have only been open 2 years and they did send us the letter. I will leave it up to you, but I do believe you have done an amazing job.

ALMA

I think it is just that God gave us a school full of amazing children.

GEORGE

So what do you want to do?

Alma looks at her students. She looks at every one. Her heart melts.

The students look back somewhat concerned and a little worried.

She sighs,

ALMA

Okay, This letter is to inform us that up the road in Nashville they are going to open their very first college. It will be only for Blacks. The basic requirement is to be able to read, write, and have math skills. This letter is asking if we have any students that might be interested in applying. There will be a test, and it is next weekend. Is anyone interested in applying?

Every hand shoots up. Everyone is giddy and talking amongst themselves.

HARRIET

You mean there is a chance we can go to college?

Alma nods.

OLD MAN

Who would have thought they would be sending slaves to college?

GEORGE

You're not slaves anymore.

ALMA

You're students now.

DOLLIE

And we may be comma, college students.

Everyone laughs and talks again.

ALMA

Now I don't want you to get your hopes too high. If you don't feel you are ready I'm sure that they will be having admissions next year also.

DOLLIE

I say we apply. If we don't get in we can always apply again next year.

Everyone agrees.

ALMA

You are the group one students, so if we have anyone that could go to college it would be you.

WINNIE

Mrs. Alma, Does it say how we are going to pay for college or is it free?

ALMA

It doesn't say. We're paid by our missions board.

DOLLIE

I'm sure they have something worked out wouldn't you think?

George and Alma look at each other.

GEORGE
I'll go and tell the wagon driver.
We have a group going to Nashville
next weekend.

Cheers begin and they break out in song.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Title - **Three Weeks Later.**

Class is in again but everyone is in different clothes from the last time we saw them.

ALMA
Since we have been talking about
money and math I am going to let
you know about a very special
secret.

Once again everyone is paying attention to her.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Lets think about God.

WINNIE
What does God have to do with
money?

ALMA
You'll get it in a minute I
promise. So God is up in heaven and
he is planning everything that He
is about to do. He notices that his
people are praying about one
specific thing. Anyone want to
guess what that is?

Everyone is quiet and looking.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Has anyone ever prayed for money?

Everyone nods slowly.

ALMA (CONT'D)
So God in heaven thinks "I know
what I'll do. I'll set up a system.
(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

I will put it in nature so my people will be blessed and set apart from everyone else." They'll get it and know it as soon as I mention it.

DOLLIE

Really, what system?

ALMA

Dollie have you ever planted a seed.

DOLLIE

Of course.

ALMA

And did you get back one seed, or a plant full of seeds. One piece of fruit or a plant full of fruit?

DOLLIE

We got a plant full of fruit.

ALMA

Now how often when you plant cotton do you get tobacco?

DOLLIE

Never.

WINNIE

That's silly. You only get what you plant.

ALMA

So if you want money guess what you have to plant?

DOLLIE

How do you plant money?

ALMA

Well you bring your tithe into the store house.

WINNIE

Tithe, I knew it. A church wanting to take our little money.

HARRIET

Do you really think God needs our money?

ALMA

See that's where you get it wrong. God doesn't need your money. The church doesn't need your money. We don't need your money. You know who does need your money?

Everybody looks.

ALMA (CONT'D)

You do. You need your money and you need more of it. Tithe is a code word to his people. It means seed in heaven. Use it as seed. Now be careful. George and I have a friend back home, that was tithing his time. Well he fell off a chair and broke his foot. It cost him his job. One day he was telling me how tithing didn't work. I asked him what he meant? He said he had been tithing his time and then he fell off a ladder and broke his foot. I asked him if he didn't have more time now? He said all he had was time. So it worked perfectly. He said it didn't work at all. He wanted money and all he has is more time. But you planted time. If you wanted money I told him you should have planted money.

DOLLIE

So he planted cotton and wanted tobacco.

ALMA

Exactly. He thought I was crazy but I think it worked perfectly.

HARRIET

But we don't have much money. How can we tithe if we don't have anything?

ALMA

You plant what you do have and God says he will bless what you have left. Now it is about to even sound worse.

Everyone looks questioningly.

ALMA (CONT'D)

There is something that separates
the rich from the poor.

WINNIE

Yeah money.

Everyone laughs.

ALMA

No something else, and that is a
simple habit. But not an easy one.
See everyone wants to save. Save a
little for a rainy day or for a
emergency.

HARRIET

Or nice pair of shoes.

ALMA

Or a nice pair of shoes. Now here
comes the habit. Poor people will
buy the things they need and save
the rest. You know how much that
is?

DOLLIE

Nothing.

Everyone laughs.

ALMA

You're right. Rich people save ten
percent off the top and then spend
the rest on what they need.

HARRIET

Wait so you mean to tell me that
Rich people give ten percent to God
and then another ten percent to
themselves?

ALMA

That is exactly what I mean.

HARRIET

Well nobody can live on eighty
percent of what they can't live on
already.

ALMA

I know it sounds crazy but that is
where Gods blessings come into
play.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

See eighty percent of your money blessed by God will go a lot farther than a hundred percent not blessed at all. After a while you will not even notice it. Beside it is a promise made by God. So if he said bring your money into the storehouse and you don't do it are you really one of His people?

DOLLIE

And if we do, do it, He blesses us and we are his people.

ALMA

That's what it says.

DOLLIE

Well I'm in. After all I don't have any money and if God wants to give me some I'll give him ten percent.

Everybody nods.

Once again the door opens and George walks in holding a few envelopes.

GEORGE

Alma I am sorry to interrupt but the mail just came.

The students are sitting up straight.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I know most of you went to Nashville a couple weeks ago so this will be the first of the letters.

ALMA

Who did they come for.

GEORGE

You want me to hand them out now?

ALMA

Sure.

GEORGE

Dollie, Winnie, Harriet these are for you.

ALMA

Why don't you girls come to the
front of the class.

Each girl takes her envelope and looks at it.

Slowly they open it and before they look they look at each
other.

WINNIE

If we don't get in we can try again
next year.

HARRIET

And if Dollie or you get in you can
write me and tell me all about it.

DOLLIE

Okay enough of this on the count of
three.

Together they say one, two, three and they all look at their
notes.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)

(trying not to smile)

I got in. I've been accepted.

WINNIE

Me too. I am going to college.

They look at Harriet

Harriet is just looking at the paper.

HARRIET

I guess I just need some more
education.

The others look disappointed.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

Which I am going to get, at
college.

She turns her paper around for all to see.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

I got in too. I'm going to college.

ALMA

Congratulations.

GEORGE

This is great. I know you had a lesson you were working on. I hope this didn't disturb it.

DOLLIE

I think you just might have proved it. I'm, I mean we are going to college.

Everyone hugs and laughs. The other students get out of their chairs and join in on the celebration.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The girls are packing and talking.

DOLLIE

I am so excited, Winnie you still got my brush?

WINNIE

I put it in your bag already.

Dollie grabs a bag and digs through it.

There is a knock on the door.

DOLLIE

Come in.

The door opens and Alma walks in.

ALMA

Good Morning ladies are you almost ready?

All together.

GROUP

Yes ma'am.

Hearing them say it together makes Alma smile.

ALMA

Let's have a seat for a minute there is something I want to talk to you about.

Alma sits on one bed and the others sit across from her.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Do you remember the first morning we met two years ago and I asked you what you knew.

The girls smile at the memory.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Dollie you said you knew nothing. Winnie you said you were good for nothing, and Harriet you said you were lazy.

The smiles have faded while they look down.

ALMA (CONT'D)

The most important thing you will ever do is control what you say and tell yourself. Remember in the Bible when God was creating the world? He said let there be light. Then He spoke the land and water, animals and even us into being. The most powerful weapon God gave us is the human voice. His voice became our voice. You can say to the mountain move and with the faith of a tiny little seed it will jump into the ocean. Well I am going to speak into your lives right now. In fact I have been since the first day I met you.

Looking up the expressions change from a sad memory to a expectant one.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Dolly you know so much. You read and write so beautifully and in only two years. Winnie you are so good at everything you do. You constantly amaze me at your talent. Actually I am a little bit jealous. Harriet You are the hardest working person I know. You girls are my first class. I know you'll make me proud. To think you have gotten into college in only two years. I hope I have taught you enough because outside of here the world still is having troubles. There are people that didn't want slaves to be freed. They sure don't want you to have an education.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

Mostly because they don't have one themselves. They are going to say things, horrible, hateful things, but don't you believe it. There are three voices that can speak into your life. First is Gods voice. Second is your voice and third is other peoples voices. So if anyone tells you something different that what God has said about you, you remind yourselves about what He said. You were created in His image. You are more than conquerors, You were wonderfully and beautifully made. He has a purpose for your life. You can do all things in Christ Jesus. Wait how many things?

Group says lowly.

GROUP

All things.

ALMA

I'm sorry what was that?

GROUP

(Louder)

All things.

DOLLIE

I can do all things.

WINNIE

I can do all things through Christ.

HARRIET

WE CAN DO.

GROUP

ALL THINGS.

ALMA

(Smiling and nodding)

You never let anyone tell you differently. You remind yourselves of this every night before you go to bed and every morning when you wake up. You need to promise me this.

GROUP

I promise.

ALMA
Every night?

GROUP
Every night.

ALMA
I guess that is my final lesson to
y'all. Oh my gosh I just said
y'all.

WINNIE
It's about time y'all started
speaking normal.

Getting up from the bed and heading to the door.

ALMA
When y'all are ready, we have
breakfast and a few people who want
to say good-bye to all y'all before
you leave.

Getting up laughing the girls continue fussing with their
stuff while Alma exits the room.

EXT. FISK - DAY

The wagon pulls up to an army barracks. There are 40 black
SOLDIERS and a few white officers in Union uniforms. They
range from 13 to 30 years old. Some are running drills. Some
are sitting around and there are of course guards.

The wagon slows at the front gate. WENDELL a boy only about
13 is standing with a gun in a Union uniform.

WINNIE
This doesn't look like I imagined
it would.

WAGON DRIVER
It's the barracks for the 117th
Colored Unit. They are converting
it into the college.

HARRIET
You mean its full of colored boys?

WAGON DRIVER
I guess it would be right, now.
Yep.

(to the guard)
Can you find Miss Eve or G. W.?

WENDELL

Yes sir, Miss Eve is right over there.

(yelling)

Miss Eve, New students are arriving.

MISS EVE is a 35ish woman in the same black clothes as Mrs. Alma. She is holding a clipboard leaves two men and comes walking over.

EVE

Well who do we have here?

WAGON DRIVER

We have the students from Bellevue ma'am.

EVE

From Bellevue. We've been waiting for you.

DOLLIE

Good afternoon ma'am my name is Dollie. Um, do you know you look a lot like our last teacher Mrs. Alma.

EVE

I hope I do.

(laughing)

She's my sister.

WINNIE

I noticed it too.

Turning to the young guard.

EVE

Wendell, will you escort these young ladies to tent W7.

WINNIE

A tent? We're living in a tent?

EVE

They're not the kind of tents you might be thinking of. They have fire places and hold six beds. The Army is letting us convert this barracks into the college. Right now there are only three of you in W7. We have five for the men and three for the women.

WENDELL

Ladies if you'll accompany me. Do you need me to get some help for your luggage?

HARRIET

Luggage? We only got one bag.

Harriet climbs down off the back and smiles at the very young boy. Dollie is helped down by the wagon driver from the front and Winnie follows Harriet. They all follow the guard into the barracks.

EXT. TENT AREA - CONTINUOUS

There are dozens of men in Uniform doing various duties in the courtyard. All of them notice the trio of women walking to their tents.

WINNIE

Harriet you think there are enough boys here for you?

HARRIET

It'll do for a start.

Harriet adds a little sachet to her walk. Some of the boys grab their chests like they're fainting. All are smiling and bowing to them.

DOLLIE

They definitely noticed us.

Wendell stops at a large tent and takes a key off a key ring.

WENDELL

We have one key for y'all now and we'll have others made for all y'all later today. There is a orientation at 17:00 hours.

WINNIE

What's 17:00 hours?

WENDELL

I'm sorry 5:00.

DOLLIE

We don't have a watch.

WENDELL

You won't need one. There is a high bell that rings every 15 minutes.
(MORE)

WENDELL (CONT'D)

Once for each quarter hour and a low one that rings for every hour.

A high bell starts to ring twice.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

There it is now. Twice means half past the hour. The last low bell said it was 15:00 hours. Or 3:00. It only rings 3 times so you have to remember the afternoon.

WINNIE

That's a lot to remember.

WENDELL

That's just the beginning, we have bugle calls for reveille that's when we wake up and taps for when we go to sleep. Then training calls, and a big triangle for mess.

HARRIET

Mess?

WENDELL

That's when we eat.

DOLLIE

We haven't even started class yet and I'm already confused.

WENDELL

Don't worry you'll get it. If you have any questions just ask anyone.

Looking up and down at the women.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

I'm sure everyone on the base will be more than happy to help you out.

HARRIET

Well, thank you kind sir.

DOLLIE

He's a little young Harriet.

Wendell opens the door and the women walk in. Harriet is the last.

HARRIET

Thank you again young Wendell.

WENDELL

Here is your key ma'am.

Taking the key Harriet enters and shuts the door.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

Entering and looking around each one picks a bunk. At the foot of each bunk is a trunk. In each trunk there is a key.

HARRIET

I don't think I am ever gonna get used to being called ma'am.

DOLLIE

They do it out of respect.

HARRIET

I know but it is still strange.

Winnie sits down on the cot.

WINNIE

Now I could get use to this.

DOLLIE

Doesn't look as comfortable as a bed.

WINNIE

I thought the beds were too soft. I like these better.

HARRIET

I think we are gonna have to start calling you Goldilocks.

WINNIE

Miss Goldilocks if you don't mind?

DOLLIE

We have a few minutes to rest before orientation. So nap or adventure. Anyone want to look around the barracks?

WINNIE

Nap. I think they will cover everything we need at orientation.

HARRIET

As much as I would like to meet all the boys here on base, I agree that a nap sounds good.

DOLLIE

Okay, nap it is.

Both Harriet and Dolly lay down on their bunks and almost as soon as they do they are asleep.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

The girl sit up in bed and look at each other.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

WENDELL

You guys in there?

Dollie gets up and opens the door.

Wendell runs in.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

Did y'all forget about orientation?

WINNIE

Oh my goodness, what time is it?

WENDELL

Time to go, it's starting now. Miss Eve sent me to find y'all.

HARRIET

We are going to need some time to get ready.

WENDELL

I'm sorry, I was told to fetch you now.

HARRIET

I want to make a good impression.

WENDELL

Being late ain't gonna do it.

DOLLIE

Okay, okay, okay lets just go.

Everyone exits.

EXT. TENT AREA - CONTINUOUS

WENDELL

They are using four of the old barracks as school rooms. Orientation will be at the Mess Hall. It's over yonder.

DOLLIE

You girls go ahead. I want to ask Wendell something.

The girls continue to the Mess Hall while Dollie and Wendell drop back.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)

I know your young but you carry a gun. Did they teach you to also defend yourself?

WENDELL

You mean fight?

Dollie nods.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

Yeah they taught us.

DOLLIE

You you think anyone can teach me?

WENDELL

To fight. Why would you want to learn that?

DOLLIE

I want to be able to protect myself and my friends.

WENDELL

You're surrounded by an army. I think you're pretty safe.

DOLLIE

You won't be around forever and it is something I am interested in.

WENDELL

I don't think they are going to let you take military training.

DOLLIE

Well, could you teach me?

WENDELL

Me, you want me to fight a girl?

DOLLIE

No not fight. I read some books on fighting and self protection back in Bellevue and I just wanted to see if I learned the right things.

WENDELL

I don't know if there is enough time?

DOLLIE

Okay I understand. You don't want to teach a girl.

WENDELL

No, its not that. I guess we could meet on the training ground in the morning when everyone is at breakfast. Its over there, on the other side of camp by those hay bales.

DOLLIE

Really you'll help me?

WENDELL

Yes ma'am I'll meet you tomorrow morning. Now get in there.

INT. MESS HALL - CONTINUOUS

This is a big room. There are four rows of five picnic tables. At the front are six serving tables. There are three Men in front talking with Miss Eve. JOHN OGDEN, REVEREND ERASTUS MILO CRAVATH, and REVEREND EDWARD P SMITH.

Sitting at the tables are about 50 people ranging from 10 to 60.

Next to the tables are a row of a dozen chairs and 5 other people are sitting in them.

JOHN OGDEN

Now that our students from Bellevue have arrived I guess we can start.

Sliding in the back of a table the girls are obviously embarrassed.

JOHN OGDEN (CONT'D)

Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to the very first class of the very first College in Nashville dedicated to the education of the American Negro. Now this school will not be a Negro School this is an American School. Teaching Americans. We will not be any different than any other school in America. You are expected to learn. If you are not hungry for education you should just leave now. The teachers and faculty have come from all over our Nation with the sole purpose of teaching you and we expect you to leave here with an education and abilities to contribute to the direction this country has decided to embrace. We are here to help you...

FADE TO:

EVE

We will be teaching Math, English, Sciences, Personal Self Esteem, and Arts. I would like to now introduce one of our Arts teachers. Mr. George White.

A man in his early 30's with jet black hair and a small beard GEORGE WHITE stands up and nods to Miss Eve.

G. W.

My name is George White. I prefer to be called G. W. I have been touring the south for almost 10 years studying what we call the Negro Spiritual. I believe that we can form a group and tour. I would like to preserve and share this music, your music, if you will, with the rest of the world.

Turning to the other teachers.

G. W. (CONT'D)

There has been some debate whether this will be a noble adventure or one destined for failure.

Turning back to the students.

G. W. (CONT'D)
 Since we are affiliated with the
 Church of Christ I will be
 officially your choir director.

Dolly whispers to the others.

DOLLIE
 There's going to be a course on
 singing?

The others smile and nod.

G. W.
 I will be holding auditions day
 after tomorrow for anyone
 interested?

A couple of the faculty looking displeased clear there
 throats.

G. W. (CONT'D)
 We may have to give a little
 demonstration on what I have in
 mind.
 (singing in a rich
 Baritone)
Swing low, sweet chariot.

G. W. Looks out at the quite students.

G. W. (CONT'D)
 Anyone?

MARCOS a man in his mid 30's and medium large stands and
 again in a Baritone replies.

MARCOS
Coming for to carry me home.

G. W.
Swing low, sweet chariot.

Now half the room replies in perfect harmonies.

GROUP
Coming for to carry me home.

G. W. turns to give an "I told you so" look to the faculty
 members and Dollie stands.

DOLLIE

*I looked over Jordan, and what did
I see?*

GROUP

Coming for to carry me home.

MARCOS

*(looking at the women)
A band of angels coming after me.*

The women now have a somewhat coy look on their faces.

GROUP

Coming for to carry me home.

Harriet and Winnie stand now with Dollie and together sing

HARRIET

If you get there before I do.

GROUP

Coming for to carry me home.

WINNIE

*Tell all my friends I'm coming,
too.*

GROUP

Coming for to carry me home.

*Swing low, sweet chariot.
Coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot.
Coming for to carry me home.*

Now there is clapping and everybody's Standing and singing.
Some are doing repeats.

Eve is even trying as are some of the other faculty. They are
not use to this type of music.

JESSIE a friend to Marcos thin a few years younger with
shorter hair and a mustache stands beside Marcos and takes
the next verse.

JESSIE

*I'm sometimes up and sometimes
down.*

GROUP

Coming for to carry me home.

MARCOS
*But still my soul feels
 heavenly bound.*

JESSIE
*But still my soul feels
 heavenly bound.*

GROUP
Coming for to carry me home.

*Swing low, sweet chariot.
 Coming for to carry me home.
 Swing low, sweet chariot.
 Coming for to carry me home.*

*Swing low, sweet chariot.
 Coming for to carry me home.
 Swing low, sweet chariot.
 Coming for to carry me,
 (Extended)
 home.*

Every one claps at the end of the song. You can tell something special has happened in the room. A couple of the faculty members have put their hands to their face with a bent finger over their mouths. Eve is smiling huge.

John Ogden stands and confronts G. W.

JOHN OGDEN
 So these are not Hymns.

G. W.
 No sir. They are called spirituals.

JOHN OGDEN
 And even though you have been freed
 you wouldn't mind still singing
 them?

MARCOS
 No sir. Freedom is what we where
 singing about.

DOLLIE
 We just thought we'd never see it
 this side of heaven,
 (pause)
 Sir.

JOHN OGDEN
 Okay G. W. You can have auditions
 for your choir day after tomorrow.

G. W.
 Thank you sir.

He nods slightly to John.

The girls are looking at each other and excited about joining the choir. Harriet looks over and both Marcos and Jessie are looking at them. Dollie follows her gaze and motions to Winnie.

WINNIE

Huh huh, I wonder who else is going to be at the audition?

INT. TENT - MORNING

Reveille blows somewhere outside the tent.

WINNIE

Do they have to blow that thing morning and night?

HARRIET

According to Wendell they do.

WINNIE

I am never joining the Army.

HARRIET

I think that's pretty safe. You do know you would be the first girl ever.

DOLLIE

Oh my goodness. Wendell.

HARRIET

What, you two have a thing going on?

DOLLIE

No, he just said he was going to help me with something.

WINNIE

What's that boy going to help you with?

DOLLIE

I don't want to tell y'all, You'll think its stupid.

HARRIET

Okay now we have to know.

WINNIE

Come on tell us, or we'll just follow you.

DOLLIE

He said he would help me learn how to fight.

WINNIE

Fight. What do you need to fight for?

HARRIET

You do know we are surrounded by the whole Union Army?

DOLLIE

Yes, I have noticed. See I knew you would think it was stupid but ever since Miss Lossie I have wanted to be able to protect y'all. I just never want anything bad to happen to my girls.

HARRIET

And you think that boy is going to help you.

WINNIE

Remember all those books she used to read.

HARRIET

About the Chinese Monks and the English boxers?

Harriet puts her hands up in a boxing pose and her and Winnie pretend to fight.

DOLLIE

Shaolin Monks and Marquess of Queensberry. I can read about it but I thought maybe while I AM surrounded by Army men they could let me know if I am doing it right.

WINNIE

Waste your time if you want to but I'm going to breakfast.

She stops fighting with Harriet.

HARRIET

You can spend your morning with one little boy and Winnie and I will take the rest of the men.

WINNIE

Speak for yourself, You can sachet all you want but I'm getting food.

Finishing getting ready they head out the door.

EXT. TENT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Harriet and Winnie head to the mess hall and Dollie takes off to the training area.

WINNIE

We'll see if we can get a little something for you and Wendell.

DOLLIE

Thank you.

Rounding the building she sees Wendell standing by some training dummies.

WENDELL

Good morning Miss Dollie.

DOLLIE

Good Morning. Thank you for meeting me.

WENDELL

No problem but I think you may be crazy.

Dollie smiles.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

I guess the first thing you should do is some stretches and calisthenics.

DOLLIE

What are they?

They begin doing simple stretches.

WENDELL

I brought out a couple dummy guns. They have fake bayonets on them.

DOLLIE

I don't plan on carrying a rifle around with me.

WENDELL

A gun can be used for a lot more than just shooting people and when you use it as a close fighting weapon you can substitute any tool for one.

Wendell uses his weapon on the fighting bag and you can tell he has been training.

Dollie picks one up and spins it like she has used one before. She follows his moves perfectly.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

You've done this before?

DOLLIE

Not with a gun but I'm crazy good with a broom.

WENDELL

Key word, crazy.

Hearing a horse galloping towards them they turn to see a LIEUTENANT coming at them. He stops a few feet from them.

Wendell spans to attention and salutes.

The Lieutenant returns the salute.

LIEUTENANT

May I ask you what you think you are doing Private?

WENDELL

Sir, yes sir. I am teaching the young lady how to fight sir.

LIEUTENANT

And why would you be doing that?

WENDELL

Well sir, she asked me to and I was ordered yesterday to help them with anything that they needed sir?

Turning to Dollie.

LIEUTENANT

You don't think we have enough men on this base to protect you?

DOLLIE

No sir, I mean yes sir, there are definitely enough men here. I feel very protected.

LIEUTENANT

Then why would you like to learn how to fight?

DOLLIE

Well, I won't always be here and I have always had a interest in self protection and since I have all these well trained men around me I thought I could pick up some tricks.

LIEUTENANT

(getting off his horse)

At ease Private.

Wendell stands down.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

The first thing to remember is to avoid a fight whenever possible. Fighting should always be the very last thing you should do. People who fight get to the point where they believe they have no other option, or they're just too stupid to find another way. Second remember that any weapon you use can be taken away from you and used against you. Now try to stab me.

WENDELL

Sir she is pretty good.

LIEUTENANT

I know. I was watching. Attack me.

Dollie goes to stab the Lieutenant and he easily moves the gun out of the way, hits her forearms, takes the weapon, spins around and stops with the fake bayonet right at her throat.

DOLLIE

Ouch, that hurt.

LIEUTENANT

But now, your weapon is now my weapon.

DOLLIE

Can you show me slowly how you did that?

LIEUTENANT

Sure.

Hands the weapon back.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Now try to stab me.

Dollie again tries to stab the Lieutenant but very slowly now.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

First I watch your eyes because they give away where you are going. Then I block the motion with the inner arm while coming down on your forearms with my outer arm popping the gun up which I grab. Then I spin around and cut your neck.

DOLLIE

Okay, I think I got it. Here come at me.

She hand the gun to the Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT

Are you sure?

DOLLIE

Yes sir. I think I got this.

The Lieutenant lunges the gun at Dollie and she follows his motion exactly. Hitting his arms, taking the gun spinning around except that instead of pulling back she hits him in the side of the head.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)

I am so sorry.

LIEUTENANT

Your right I think you've got it.

DOLLIE

I didn't mean to...

LIEUTENANT
No no. I'm fine.

Wendell is freaking out

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Now have you ever boxed?

DOLLIE
I have read about it. Your not
going to make me hit you are you?

LIEUTENANT
Not this time. We are going to use
the punching bag. Now this is a
right cross, this is a left cross,
and this is a uppercut.

Demonstrating each punch on the bag.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
You can develop a rhythm. Right,
left, upper, upper. You can upper
cut the head or the torso. Now you
try it.

Stepping up to the bag Dollie makes a fist and goes into a
stance.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Would you mind lifting your skirt
to your ankles so I can see your
feet?

Dollie lifts her skirt a little bit.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Very good stance and you got that
out of a book huh? Now make a fist.

Dollie does.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Okay wait. Move your thumb over
here and hit with your knuckles. If
you keep your thumb there you would
break it. So practice.

Dollie does what she was shown.

DOLLIE
Right cross, left cross, upper cut,
upper cut. Right cross, left cross,
upper cut, upper cut.

LIEUTENANT

Okay I think you got it.

Mounting his horse.

DOLLIE

Thank you for your help but can I ask you a question Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT

Sure?

DOLLIE

Why did you help me?

LIEUTENANT

I have three little sisters at home and I am not there to help them. So I understand your reasons. Carry on Private.

(tipping his hat)

Ma'am.

Dollie curtsies, Wendell salutes and the lieutenant again returns it, smiles, turns and rides off. Dolly and Wendell continue to watch him ride away and both not looking at each other.

WENDELL

Did you just curtsy?

DOLLIE

Yeah I think I did.

WENDELL

Have you ever done that before?

DOLLIE

Nope first time.

WENDELL

Okay then. Let me show you some other things you can do with a gun and we'll use the punching bag, oh and please, do not hit the Lieutenant again.

DOLLIE

Okay, got it.

They turn and start to train again.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

G. W. and a student are moving a spinet piano to the corner of the room.

The girls walk in and take a seat at the second table. Looking around the room they only see a dozen people.

Marcos and Jessie walk in and sit down on the other side of the table.

JESSIE

Good afternoon ladies. We never got a chance to meet you yesterday. My name is Jessie and this is my brother Marcos.

HARRIET

Good afternoon gentleman. My Name is Harriet and these are my sisters Dollie and Winnie.

JESSIE

Y'all were pretty good singers yesterday.

WINNIE

We're pretty good singers every day.

DOLLIE

Are y'all brothers from the same mother or the same plantation?

JESSIE

Same plantations.

MARCOS

What about y'all?

HARRIET

Same thing. We're from the Bellevue Plantation.

JESSIE

We're from the Carlton Plantation in Murfreesboro.

MARCOS

Was the fighting bad there?

DOLLIE

We don't know. They stuck us in a root cellar.

HARRIET
I was in the tobacco smokehouse.

JESSIE
That's a terrible place to hide.

WINNIE
Wasn't our choice.

HARRIET
Isn't Murfreesboro south of here?

JESSIE
Yes ma'am it is.

DOLLIE
Was the fighting bad near you.

JESSIE
Not where we were, but near us. We
were at the mansion and they turned
it into a hospital.

MARCOS
So many wounded. The blood was
flowing through the front door an
inch deep.

DOLLIE
What where they bringing to you
Blues or Grays?

JESSIE
Blues. The Grays never got off the
battle field.

WINNIE
Good, let em all die.

HARRIET
Winnie.

DOLLIE
It's seems like yesterday we was
singing in a cotton field and now
we are auditioning to sing at a
college.

JESSIE
(Speaking very slowly)
Well, things happen mighty fast
around here.

Everybody laughs.

G. W. does a run over the keyboard. It is mostly in tune but not completely.

G. W.
We'll see if we can get a piano tuner in here sometime. I was hoping for more of a turn out but I understand a lot of people are more concerned about the class load then the electives.

The students look at him blankly.

G. W. (CONT'D)
Lets start by having all the women on the right side over there.

Pointing to his left.

G. W. (CONT'D)
And all the men on the left side pointing to his right.

Everyone gets up and moves to their area

G. W. (CONT'D)
Let's see if we have anyone who can sing low bass.

He hits a low note.

G. W. (CONT'D)
Anyone hit this note.

Every man tries and it sounds pretty bad a couple guys start coughing.

G. W. (CONT'D)
That didn't work. Lets try it one at a time. Ladies have a seat.

The girls sit down.

Starting with the first man G. W. Goes through each one till he has found their range. On to the women he continues with the same routine.

After he has each person stand in the proper place on the stage.

G. W. (CONT'D)
 This section will be the Baritone,
 this the Tenor, this the Alto and
 this the Soprano. So now lets begin
 our first music lesson.

Music plays over scenes of lessons.

EXT. FISK - EVENING

The choir is set on the porch and there are chairs assembled
 in the parade area. Every one filled. Kids are running in the
 background and men and women are standing with officers.

G. W.
 Ladies and Gentleman, Military and
 Civilians, Member of the barracks,
 Students and our friends from
 Nashville. I would like to thank
 you for coming to the first public
 performance of the Fisk College
 Choir.

G. W. walks off the porch turning his back to the audience he
 begins to direct the choir.

Even the children stop running and listen to the most amazing
 music ever heard on Earth.

At the end they receive a standing ovation.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Everyone is in the room except for Jessie and G. W.

DOLLIE
 I never knew it would feel so good
 to perform in front of people.

MARCOS
 You did so good. That high note I
 was wondering if you would pull it
 off and bam you nailed it girl.

WINNIE
 I was so nervous did you see all
 the people?

MARCOS
 It was like all of Nashville turned
 up.

WINNIE

I think Harriet stole the show.
Every men in the audience was
looking at her.

DOLLIE

You even had the little boys
looking at you.

HARRIET

Oh stop it y'all. They were
checking out all of us.

MARCOS

Boys weren't checking me out.

HARRIET

You sure?

Everyone laughs at that. Except Marcos.

DOLLIE

Well the women sure were.

MARCOS

That's okay.

Now he joins in the laughter.

G. W. and Jessie enter the room.

MARCOS (CONT'D)

Ladies and Gentleman the greatest
choir director in Nashville, and
maybe the world Mr. George White.

Jessie joins the others at the table and G. W. goes to the
front of the class.

G. W.

Thank you, Thank you.

He bows. Everyone continues to clap.

G. W. (CONT'D)

I have to tell you. I have never
been so proud of anyone ever in my
life as I was with you last
evening. I do not have a criticism
of a single thing. If I have ever
seen anything flawless that was
last nights performance. But, I
have some good news and some bad
news. What do you want first?

WINNIE

I always want the bad news first.

G. W.

Okay I am going to have to cut the group to a smaller size. We can only have a maximum of four people for a quartet including me and one extra man and woman as stand-bys.

DOLLIE

A maximum of four people for what?

G. W.

Well, That's the good news. We have had an offer to perform in Lexington Kentucky. But the wagon will hold a maximum of seven.

Everybody is abuzz about performing again.

DOLLIE

We get to sing in front of an audience again.

G. W.

Yes we do, and they are going to pay us.

Everybody says "PAY US"

G. W. (CONT'D)

Yes we are splitting the door with a few touring Minstrel groups.

WINNIE

Wait, wait, wait aren't those white people who put on black face.

HARRIET

We already have a black face.

G. W.

Exactly what I was thinking. I don't see where we would have any trouble. We could make up to a dollar a show and play one show on Friday night and a Matinee and 2 evening shows on Saturday. We would have to leave on Friday morning

DOLLIE

A dollar a show? That is like a full week salary for just singing.

G. W.

The thing is all the money would have to go back to the school. The Dean has approved it and the Lieutenant will be providing the horse and wagon. We don't pay for food, supplies, or boarding and there will be costs on the trip. So who would like to be in the group?

Every hand goes up.

EXT. STREET LEXINGTON - DAY

The wagon pulls up to the front of the theater and everyone looks at the Marquee. In the middle of the names of the performers is the Fisk College Singers.

G. W. pulls the wagon around back and finds the stage door.

There is a large balding man The STAGE MANAGER, smoking a cigar. He is wearing a white wife beater and suspenders.

STAGE MANAGER

Can I help you sir?

G. W.

Yes sir. We are performing here tonight.

STAGE MANAGER

I don't think so.

G. W.

We are the Fisk College Singers.

STAGE MANAGER

Sir, we don't allow blacks in the theater.

G. W.

I have a letter from the theater owner asking us to come perform. There was a contract attached.

STAGE MANAGER

Let me see the letter.

G. W. hands the man the letter. He looks at it.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)

This is highly unusual. I am going to have to get the owner.

The stage manager takes the letter and starts in the door.

G. W.

Excuse me, since you have the
letter and I have the agreement can
I come along?

STAGE MANAGER

Sure but the negro's have to stay
in the wagon.

G. W.

You guys stay right here. I'll sort
this out.

He hands the reins to Marcos who was sitting next to him and
Marcos starts to climb down off the wagon.

STAGE MANAGER

I said the coloreds have to stay in
the wagon.

MARCOS

Sir, I am just going to tie up the
horses. We came here from Nashville
to sing not to cause any trouble.

Standing in the alley are two young black boys. After the
Stage Manager and G. W. go inside they approach Marcos who is
stretching after a long trip.

YOUNG MAN

Y'all from Nashville?

MARCOS

Yes Sir.

YOUNG MAN

Y'all from Fisk?

MARCOS

Yes, why?

YOUNG MAN

Y'all go to college?

MARCOS

Yes, but we are here to sing
tonight?

YOUNG MAN

At this theater?

MARCOS
We're suppose to.

The young boys start to laugh and run down the alley.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
(to the wagon)
That was strange.

The others start to stand up and stretch. A group of men carrying garment bags walk by them and start to climb the stairs entering the back door.

WINNIE
Now they're gonna get all dressed
up and pretend to be black.

JESSIE
That just doesn't make any sense.

The door opens and out walks G. W.

G. W.
There was a mistake. They didn't
know you were black. They are going
to let us perform. We are going on
in the fourth spot. That way people
won't walk out. You are going to be
the first colored group they have
ever had at the theater. One other
thing, They won't let you have any
changing rooms so you'll have to
get ready out here.

JESSIE
Out here where?

G. W.
In the bushes.

DOLLIE
Are we going to have trouble
tonight G. W.?

G. W.
We're going to pray before we go
in.

INT. LEXINGTON THEATER - LATER

There is a group of Minstrels finishing a Stephen Foster
song. Camp Town Races.

The THEATER OWNER a man who would be better suited for a circus comes out on stage.

THEATER OWNER

Ladies and Gentlemen. We have an amazing surprise for you tonight. All the way from Nashville Tennessee. In what is only their second public performance. The Fisk College Choir.

The crowd claps politely until the singers are on the stage and have taken there positions. Then they stop and murmuring begins.

One woman in the third row grabs her husbands arm.

WOMAN

Honey, those are real, black, people.

HUSBAND

No honey that can't be. Wait oh my. They are real black people.

Now everyone is talking loudly and they start yelling.

CROWD

Get off the stage. Go home. Go back to Nashville.

DOLLIE

(to Winnie)

I hear when they don't like you they throw food.

WINNIE

I hope so. I'm hungry and I doubt we're going to get paid anyway.

The Theater Owner walks out on stage.

THEATER OWNER

Ladies and Gentleman please, please. Is there a problem?

HUSBAND

Yes there's a problem. We came here to see minstrels not black people.

THEATER OWNER

So you came here to see white people in black face but not black people?

MAN

Hell no. I want my money back.

THEATER OWNER

Well if its that. You paid a nickel to get in tonight. Money you worked hard for. There are six acts. A penny for each minstrels and we are giving you the singers from Nashville for free. So let them do one song and they'll leave.

MAN

Okay one song.

Everyone seems quiet now and they all take there seats. You can still tell some of the women are concerned.

G. W. turns to the PIANO PLAYER.

G. W.

Can I have a G above middle C?

PIANO PLAYER

(shaking his head no)

I ain't playing for black folks. It ain't going to happen.

G. W.

Can you give me one note?

Piano player shakes his head no.

G. W. (CONT'D)

Can I play it then?

Piano player shuts the lid. Still shaking his head no.

G. W. (CONT'D)

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen.
He hum's a note.

Dollie steps up and looks at the crowd. They can all sense how scared of them she is. She takes a deep breath.

DOLLIE

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen.

GROUP

Nobody knows but Jesus.

They launch into the most wonderfully rich and amazing rendition anyone has ever heard.

You see the women and some of the men tearing up. The entire crowd relaxes and enjoys the performance.

When they are finished it is completely quiet in the theater.

G. W.
Okay lets go.

The turn and begin to walk off.

WOMAN
Encore.

MAN
(clapping)
Bravo, encore, encore.

The crowd erupts into cheers of bravo, encore, and applause.

The theater owner is on the side waving them back.

THEATER OWNER
Do another one. Go, go, go.

The performers walk back.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

The performers are coming out of the bushes all changing their clothes.

G. W. exits the stage door.

DOLLIE
That was amazing. I was so scared to begin with.

G. W.
They loved you. All of you. All of us. The Theater Owner gave us an extra fifty cents. We earned a even two dollars.

WINNIE
Good because I am starving.

HARRIET
By the way where are we sleeping tonight.

G. W.
I don't know? I didn't think that far ahead.
(MORE)

G. W. (CONT'D)

We have to stay here because he said we would get double pay for tomorrows performances.

The door opens from the stage area and the piano player walks out.

PIANO PLAYER

Hey I am glad you guys are still here. I wanted to apologize for not playing for you. It was so stupid of me. If you'll let me I would love to accompany you tomorrow. I also collected some food from the other performers rooms.

JESSIE

Thanks but I don't eat other peoples garbage.

WINNIE

If they haven't ate it I will. I'm starving.

G. W.

Thank you sir. That is very kind of you. We would love to have you accompany us tomorrow.

PIANO PLAYER

I will play for you anytime. Just let me know.

He hands two bags of food down to the group, turns and goes back inside.

DOLLIE

I didn't see that happening.

In the shadows behind them you see a large black woman MOMMA and the two boys from earlier in the day coming down the alley.

MOMMA

Excuse me folks, are y'all the singers from Nashville?

MARCOS

Yes ma'am we are. Hi boys.

The boys smile.

MOMMA

From the college?

G. W.

Yes ma'am.

MOMMA

Fisk?

DOLLIE

Yes, you know of us?

MOMMA

My sons told me about you today.
Did they let y'all play tonight?

HARRIET

Yes ma'am and it was wonderful

WINNIE

Sure didn't start that way though.

MOMMA

But they did let you sing?

Everyone nods.

MOMMA (CONT'D)

Will miracles ever cease? Y'all can
call me Momma, These are my boys. I
have a house just over yonder. I
don't know if you have a place to
stay tonight but I have a couple
rooms if you need them?

G. W.

Well that's awful kind of you
but,,,

MOMMA

I also have some fried chicken,
collard greens, okra, hush puppies,
watermelon and biscuits and gravy.

G. W.

That sounds nice but...

WINNIE

Yeah don't listen to him.

JESSIE

He might be crazy. Did you say
collard greens and hush puppies?

G. W.

Look we just don't have the money.

MOMMA

Oh you don't need no money. Its all free. I've been feeding and putting up run away slaves for 10 years and praise Jesus its been kind of slow lately. Now there is a little catch though.

G. W.

A huh?

MOMMA

Do y'all think you can stay till Sunday morning and sing for our congregation?

G. W.

Sing for our supper?

MOMMA

Something like that, and breakfast.

Everyone stops and looks at G. W.

He returns their looks.

Pausing and then looking at Momma.

G. W.

I love fried chicken.

Cheers.

WINNIE

We get to eat. Biscuits and gravy.

DOLLIE

Do you fry your okra?

MOMMA

Is there any other way?

G. W.

Marcos can you get the horses?

MARCOS

Already have.

And off they go to Momma's house.

EXT. MOMMAS HOUSE - MORNING

There are three big picnic tables between a house and a endless yard of sheets hanging on lines. Everyone is at the tables.

A couple of the girls are helping Momma with the dishes.

G. W. is talking to Jesse, Marcos, and Dollie.

G. W.

I had a dream last night. We were performing in Jerusalem during their year of forgiveness. I had the book of Leviticus on my mind. When I woke up all I could think of was 25:1-4 specifically. Momma let me look it up in her Bible before you were up. It was called the year of Jubilee. When all debts where forgiven. So I was thinking of changing our name to the Fisk Jubilee Singers. That way we could live in the year of forgiveness.

JESSIE

The Fisk Jubilee Singers. I like it.

DOLLIE

I do too. I'm a Jubilee singer.

Winnie comes over and sits down.

WINNIE

I am so full.

DOLLIE

That's a first.

WINNIE

What are y'all talking about.

DOLLIE

G. W. Wants to change our name to the Jubilee Singers.

WINNIE

I like it. All those Minstrel groups had names. Maybe it would make it easier for people to except us?

Tearing through the sheets comes Momma's two boys.

YOUNG MAN
Mr. G. W., Mr. G. W.

G. W.
Over here.

YOUNG MAN
Mr. G. W.. Everyone in town is talking about you and what happened last night. You're even in the newspaper. I told the newsboy you where staying at my Momma's house and they gave me one for free.

G. W.
Well read it to us.

The boy looks down.

YOUNG MAN
I don't know how to read.

WINNIE
Well, I do. Jump up here on my lap and we'll read it together.

First thing she does is turn the paper upside down so it is right side up.

WINNIE (CONT'D)
Unsurpassed by anything ever seen before the public. Last night during the Minstrel performance at the downtown theater a group of singers from the first American Negro College in Nashville Tennessee, Fisk University. Performed in front of a sold out house. Many in attendance where shocked to find out that the performers, where in fact, Negro's themselves.

JESSIE
Yes we are.

WINNIE
They did not sing the more familiar tunes of the day but instead chose to sing a selection of unique and characteristic folk and spiritual songs of their heritage.
(MORE)

WINNIE (CONT'D)

They won the crowd with a sweetness and charm utilizing a pathos that have never been more excelled. They will be performing a Matinee and two shows this evening. This writer plans to attend all of them.

G. W.

I have an idea.

He stands and takes a coin out of his pocket.

G. W. (CONT'D)

How much are the papers?

YOUNG MAN

A penny sir.

G. W.

Here is 25 cents. Go to the boy who sold you this and buy 24 more. Make sure you pay him for this one.

Handing the coin to the boy the boy runs off.

G. W. (CONT'D)

We are going to send this ahead of us at all the cities and shows we do.

DOLLIE

You want to let them know we're coming?

G. W.

Yes we sure do.

INT. TENT REVIVAL - MORNING

This is a large black tent revival. The choir has taken the stage and is preparing to sing. On the side of the stage are five Deacons and the Reverend of the church.

Under the tent the members are all wearing suits and nice dresses with hats. The women are fanning themselves.

G. W. walks to the front of the choir, Even the standbys have joined them, looking at each member smiling.

G. W.

This one is all yours.

He turns and sits on the front row.

The singers look at each other for a moment then Dollie steps to the front and starts.

Joshua fit the Battle of Jericho.

As the song plays the clothes change and titles read.

Cincinnati

Louisville

Chicago

St. Louis

Syracuse

Akron

Indianapolis

Paducah

Springfield

Columbus

Pittsburg

Cleveland

Peoria

Fort Wayne

Boston

Evansville

Sometimes in theaters. Sometimes in churches. Often have the crowd on the feet in applause.

EXT. THEATER ALLEY - NIGHT

TITLE: **Philadelphia**

The group is leaving through the stage door. They are chatting with some minstrels and each other.

There is a crowd of about 30 people waiting for them. The crowd erupts in applause as they walk out.

Coming down the stairs they are shaking hands and some ask for autographs. There is lots for chit chat, hugs, handshakes, bows, and curtsies.

Appearing from the side of the alley a tall, very distinguished, SIR THOMAS LEWIS walks towards G. W.

SIR THOMAS
(British accent)
Excuse me, excuse me, sir. Mister
choir director sir.

G. W. Breaks away from a conversation with thin black lady MISS ROBERTA and turns toward Sir Thomas.

G. W.
Good Evening name's G. W.

SIR THOMAS
Yes sir, My name is Thomas Lewis.
Sir Thomas Lewis I am from London.
Tonight was a incredible
performance. I believe I have a
unique offer for you. Could I meet
you later at your hotel?

G. W.
We don't stay in hotels. We are
staying with a friend. Miss Roberta
this is Sir Thomas Lewis.

ROBERTA
Pleased to meet you sir.

SIR THOMAS
You don't stay in proper lodging?

G. W.
Oh it's more than proper. We have
room and board and we perform for
their congregation on Sunday.

SIR THOMAS
Extraordinary.

G. W.
Anything you might have to say you
can say here unless you would like
to come with us.

ROBERTA
Oh we have more than enough food.

SIR THOMAS

Thank you ma'am. I am honored but I am leaving very early in the morning so I guess this will have to do. I guess this will have to do. I wonder sir if you have ever thought about doing a tour through Europe?

At that everyone becomes quiet and Jessie, Harriet, Marcos, Dollie, and Winnie join G. W. and Roberta.

G. W.

No sir I can't say that I have.

SIR THOMAS

I am prepared to off you Forty dollars US a performance.

HARRIET

Forty dollars that's more then we make a...

G. W. puts his hand up to quiet her.

G. W.

How many performances are you thinking of?

SIR THOMAS

There would be one per Wednesday and Thursday evening. Two on Fridays through Sunday evening with a additional matinee on the weekends. Ten per city.

G. W.

How many cities are you thinking of?

SIR THOMAS

We could start with ten.

G. W.

Ten with ten shows per city at forty dollars a show?

SIR THOMAS

We would begin and end in London. Paris, Brussels, Munich, Austria, Venice, Rome, Monaco, and Madrid.

G. W.
That's four thousand dollars for
ten weeks.

SIR THOMAS
Yes sir. Plus I will provide all
transportation, food, and lodging
for the entire trip.

The group is staring at G. W. With their mouths open in
disbelief.

G. W.
I will have to get permission from
the school, but...

Extending his hand.

G. W. (CONT'D)
I, We would love to go to Europe.

The kids smile and laugh.

SIR THOMAS
I will draw up the necessary
agreements and itineraries together
with a deposit and send them to the
University.

G. W.
A deposit?

SIR THOMAS
Fifty percent is customary. Will
that be enough?

G. W.
I am sure that will be fine.

G. W. and Sir Thomas shake on the agreement. Dollie sticks
her hand out. Looking for a moment at Dollie Sir Thomas then
shakes her hand. All the students extend their hands and Sir
Thomas shakes them all.

Dollie extends her hand to G. W. They shake then she extends
to Miss Roberta. By now everyone laughing and shaking hands.
The entire crowd is shaking hands.

Winnie notices that Harriet and Jessie are only shaking each
others hands and looking into each others eyes.

DOLLIE
Winnie, can you believe it. Four
thousand dollars that's more than
we made all of last year.

WINNIE
(still looking at Harriet
and Jessie)
That sure is a lot of money.

Dollie joins the hand shaking group again.

EXT. STREET NASHVILLE - NIGHT

Winnie and Dollie are walking back to the University carrying
grocery bags in their hands.

DOLLIE
Can you believe next week we are
going to be on a boat to London?

WINNIE
I don't know how to feel. I feel
kind of numb.

DOLLIE
I know it's a dream come true for
me. Singing all over the world.

WINNIE
We are still not treated as well as
the white folks.

DOLLIE
I'm not going to spend a minute of
my life worried about them. I am
going to spend every minute of my
life enjoying my life. This is my
dream come true.

Winnie is silent.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
Winnie, what's your dream?

WINNIE
I don't know.

DOLLIE
Come on there has to be something?

WINNIE

I don't have a dream. I never have.
I always thought they were silly
and stupid things. I am glad you
have yours but I never have had
one. I don't think I ever will.

Dollie thinks about this and notices three white men walking
towards them. The men are drunk and staggering. One of them
has a torch.

EVIL WHITE MAN

Looky boys we got ourself more
blacks thinking they can just walk
anywhere they want to.

DOLLIE

Sir we don't want any trouble.

WINNIE

We are just going back to the
University.

EVIL WHITE MAN

Did I ask you where you were going?

WINNIE

No sir.

EVIL WHITE MAN

I think we have other plans for
you. I think its time you meet
Jesus.

The men start towards the girls. Dollie drops one of her bags
and grabs the other one with both hands and swings it as hard
as she can hitting two of the men in the head they fall down.

The first evil man comes up behind her and grabs her.

She reaches down and grabs his balls and just squeezes.

As he screams he releases her and again with both hands she
grabs her bag and swings it up hitting him in the face then
spins around knocking him in the side of the head.

He falls into the other two still on the ground but trying to
get up. All three fall again.

Facing Winnie.

DOLLIE

RUN!!!

Leaving their bags they start tearing down the road.

WINNIE

We ain't ever gonna make the
University.

DOLLIE

Let's see if we can make that barn.

They turn off the road and start running through a field.

The men are now getting up and see them running.

EVIL WHITE MAN

I'm going to lynch them and burn
them to ashes.

Running through the field Winnie starts to take off her
dress.

DOLLIE

What are you doing? You think
taking off your dress is going to
make you run faster then them white
guys?

WINNIE

I don't have to run faster then
them. I have to run faster than
you.

DOLLIE

Uh uh.

Dollie takes her clothes off also with a quick pull over her
head and they both run in their bloomers through the field.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Running into the barn they see a ladder and start to climb.
At the top are hay bails. Dollie sees a chain over a pulley
and attaches the end which has a small hook to the wire on
one of the bails. They hide behind the bails.

DOLLIE

When I tell you to. Push this off
to the ground.

Winnie looks at her like she's crazy.

The door swings open in the three men enter.

EVIL WHITE MAN
We know you're in here.

EVIL WHITE MAN 2
We should just burn it.

Seeing dust fall through the cracks in the loft.

EVIL WHITE MAN
There they are.

The man with the torch puts it in a device on the side of a beam and the three of them approach the ladder. Two of them start to climb with the third on the bottom.

Dollie waits till they are all in a row and pushes a bail on them. They land on top of each other with the bail on top of them. She jumps off the loft and lands on the pile of men and hay.

Grabbing the other end of the chain she wraps it twice around one of the mens legs hooks it and yells.

DOLLIE
NOW.

Winnie pushes the bail and it goes nowhere. Dollie grabs the chain and pulls it towards her taking the weight.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
Push it again hard.

Winnie pushes it with all her might almost going over with it.

The man flies up cracking his head on the ladder.

Dollie grabs a long handled shovel and as the other two men get up pokes one hard in the neck with the small end.

As he is grabbing his neck she pops him in the solar plex.

She then reaches between the legs of the Evil White Guy at the knees vertically twisting the shovel flat and pulling hard takes his legs out from under him, flattens him on his back.

She spins and hits the other standing man in the head, and he's out.

Winnie begins to climb down.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
Get on your knees.

The man rolls over and slowly gets up on his knees, groggy.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
Now, tell me that you love me.

What? WINNIE What? EVIL WHITE MAN

DOLLIE
Tell me that you love me.

EVIL WHITE MAN
I am never going to tell some
stupid.

DOLLIE
Tell me that you love me or I swear
to the good Lord Jesus I am going
to cut your head off and the rest
of you into itty bitty pieces and
feed you to the pigs out back

EVIL WHITE MAN
Okay okay.
(With total hatred)
I, LOVE, YOU.

DOLLIE
Okay now,,, (sweetly)
Ask me to marry you.

What? WINNIE What? EVIL WHITE MAN

Winnie looks like Dollie has lost her mind.

EVIL WHITE MAN (CONT'D)
I am never going to ask some crazy
nig...

DOLLIE
(raising the shovel
higher)
Don't you ever say that word to me.
Now ask me to marry you.

EVIL WHITE MAN
(hatred though his teeth)
Will, You, Marry, Me?

DOLLIE
Hmmm.

Looks up like she is thinking about it.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
(pause)
HELL NO.

She swings the shovel and cracks him square on the side of his head. He's out.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
Come on lets get out of here.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Dollie shuts the door and slides the shovel through the door handles.

WINNIE
You think we should burn it?

DOLLIE
I thought about it but it seems like a waste of a perfectly good barn.

WINNIE
You know they're just gonna get a bigger group and come after us.

DOLLIE
Sure, I can see those three guys going into town and saying that a little black girl beat them up.

WINNIE
Hmm, I guess we're pretty safe.

DOLLIE
Think so. Now lets get our dresses we can't be running around in our bloomers all night.

EXT. STREET NASHVILLE - MOMENTS LATER

Dollie and Winnie are fixing their dresses as they are walking.

Approaching from town are the Lieutenant and 8 men.

LIEUTENANT
Good evening ladies, Are you okay?

WINNIE

Yes sir.

DOLLIE

We are now. We were attacked by some men but we were able to get a way.

LIEUTENANT

You got away?

DOLLIE

Yes sir.

WINNIE

Yes Sir.

LIEUTENANT

We've had some trouble in town and we are going to need you to get back to base. What happened?

DOLLIE

Three drunk white guys chased us into that barn over there. As we were hiding they started fighting with themselves and we were able to get away.

LIEUTENANT

They started fighting with themselves?

DOLLIE

Yes sir.

LIEUTENANT

Miss Winnie.

WINNIE

Yes sir. That's what happened.

LIEUTENANT

Are these your groceries?

DOLLIE

Yes sir.

LIEUTENANT

Some of your stuff is pretty smashed up and it looks like there is blood on one of the bags.

DOLLIE

Well we dropped them pretty fast
and I can't imagine what that stain
is from? Might have been something
on the ground.

LIEUTENANT

Hmm, Okay. I need four of you men
to escort these ladies back to the
Base. The rest of us will take a
look in the barn.

DOLLIE

Thank you sir.

WINNIE

Thank you.

The Lieutenant and four men head off towards the barn.

Wendell and three other men start to escort the women back to
the base.

WENDELL

You gonna stick with that lame ass
story.

DOLLIE

Yep.

WINNIE

What else happened tonight?

WENDELL

I don't know exactly. All I can
tell you is that you may not have
been the first people those men ran
across.

INT. TENT - MORNING

There is a knock on the door. Dollie gets up and heads for
the door noticing on the way that Harriet's bed has not been
slept in.

The Lieutenant and G. W. enter. G. W. is obviously
distraught.

DOLLIE

What's wrong?

WINNIE

Where's Harriet?

G. W. bursts into tears.

G. W.
They killed her. They killed her.

The Lieutenant puts his hand on his shoulder. The girls hug each other, Beginning to cry they sit on the bed.

DOLLIE
How?

G. W.
They beat her. They lynched her.

WINNIE
Why?

LIEUTENANT
We don't know. They killed two other black men in town then they came out here. We don't know why. Do you know why she would have been outside the base?

WINNIE
No sir, no idea.

G. W. joins them on the bed and they sob in each others arms.

G. W.
We have cancelled school today and we are having a wake tonight.

They continue crying.

LIEUTENANT
Miss Dollie may I speak to you for a moment outside?

Dollie wipes her eyes and stands.

The Lieutenant nods at the other two and opens the door for her.

EXT. TEN - CONTINUOUS

Outside they step out of hearing of the tent.

LIEUTENANT
Those men claim that they were attacked by 10 black men.

Dollie just looks at him.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

They were identified by some towns people as the ones who killed two other black men in town.

DOLLIE

Did they say why they did it?

LIEUTENANT

No. It was just hate. Stupid hate.

DOLLIE

What's going to happen to them?

LIEUTENANT

For killing the two men in town we would have to turn them over to the Sheriff to face a trial, but for killing Harriet they get a different fate. Harriet was under our protection. Military protection. Are you sure there were not 10 black men that jumped them in that barn?

DOLLIE

No sir. I can guarantee there were not 10 men in that barn. What's going to happen to them?

LIEUTENANT

For attacking a member of the base, the sentence is death by firing squad. There is no trial.

DOLLIE

When?

LIEUTENANT

Today at noon.

DOLLIE

Can I be on that firing squad?

LIEUTENANT

(Looking heart broken)

No, I'm sorry.

(pause)

You know being in the Army is more than a uniform. We take an oath to protect our country and countrymen. To protect the ones we love. Do you understand?

DOLLIE

I think so.

The Lieutenant stands at attention and salutes Dollie

LIEUTENANT

I am so sorry for your loss ma'am.

Dollie sighs then understands. She also stands at attention and returns his salute. Her eyes fill with tears as she lowers her hand.

The Lieutenant lowers his after hers and opens his arms.

Dollie falls into his arms and begins to weep.

Wrapping his arms around her.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Its okay, just cry.

INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

The school and faculty have shown up. There are trays of food on the tables in the front and people are milling around talking. Most are crying.

Dollie and Winnie are sitting near the front and people are coming by to shake their hands and pray with them.

Marcos approaches.

MARCOS

Y'all need to talk to Jessie.

DOLLIE

Jessie, Why?

MARCOS

He's hurting real bad. He's the one who found her.

Dollie and Winnie search the room till they see him. He is by himself with his head down on a table. It looks like he is crying.

DOLLIE

Thank you Marcos but I am sure he'll be...

MARCOS

No, you don't understand. Just go talk to him.

The girls get up and cross the room.

DOLLIE

Jessie?

Jessie looks up and he is not doing well at all.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)

Jessie I know its hard...

JESSIE

I killed her.

WINNIE

What do you mean you killed her.

DOLLIE

No you didn't, it was those...

JESSIE

You don't understand. She's dead because of me. She didn't want anyone to know.

WINNIE

Know what?

JESSIE

She said we could tell after the Europe tour. She wanted to keep it a secret.

DOLLIE

Keep what a secret?

JESSIE

We started courting after the show in Philadelphia. We would meet down the road outside of base. I don't know why she was so early. We weren't suppose to meet till later. I went there and found her body. See I killed her.

DOLLIE

No you didn't kill her.

The girls look at each other.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)

Jessie did you kiss her?

Jessie continues to cry.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
Jessie did you kiss her?

JESSIE
I don't think I should...

WINNIE
JESSIE DID YOU KISS HER?

DOLLIE
We need to know. Did you kiss her?

WINNIE
Did YOU KISS HARRIET?

JESSIE
(Stands and yells)
YES, I KISSED HER. I CUPPED HER
FACE IN MY HANDS AND I KISSED HER
WITH EVERYTHING IN MY HEART.
(Beat)
I was falling in love with her and
I know she was falling in love with
me too.

WINNIE
He kissed her.

DOLLIE
She got her dream.

WINNIE
Dreams really can come true?

DOLLIE
She kissed a boy.

WINNIE
A really, nice boy.

DOLLIE
I like this boy.

WINNIE
I do too.

JESSIE
You do know I am right here?

WINNIE
Of course we know where you are.

Running around the table both girls run up to Jessie

DOLLIE

You didn't kill her. You gave her,
her dream.

They start hugging on Jessie.

WINNIE

Ever since she was a little girl
all she wanted was to be kissed by
a boy. A boy she was in love with.

DOLLIE

There is no way she would let that
happen if she didn't love you.

WINNIE

Yes, she must have loved you.

DOLLIE

And we do too.

JESSIE

It must be grief.

DOLLIE

Of course it's grief but you have
to understand. You gave her, her
dream.

WINNIE

If she could have her dreams...

DOLLIE

And?

WINNIE

You can have your dreams?

DOLLIE

Your gonna have to get a dream.

JESSIE

What's going on.

DOLLIE

We have lost a sister.

WINNIE

But we have gained a brother.

The girls sit.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

So come on Jessie. Talk to us.

DOLLIE
Tell us all about it. Tell us
about...

WINNIE
Everything. When you knew.

DOLLIE
Your first date.

WINNIE
Everything.

Jessie sits with his new sisters and begins to chit chat.

EXT. TENT AREA - MORNING

Title: October 6th 1891

Jubilee Day.

The singers, G. W., some faculty, and John Ogden are standing on the porch. There are three groups in front of them. There are students, A small group of Soldier's, and a larger group of City people. Mostly black

JOHN OGDEN
Ladies and Gentlemen. Today we are sending out our singers not only to teach the message of hope and freedom to the American people, but to the world. Through their tireless efforts and self sacrifice they have saved our school time and time again. We will never know all the difficulties they have endured. We will never tell them ours. Ours is not a competition of suffering but songs of grace and forgiveness, love and acceptance. So today October 6th we institute Jubilee Day.

G. W.
Steps to the front again and the singers begin.
(Song to be chosen later)

INT. MESS HALL - MOMENTS LATER

JOHN OGDEN

G. W. For the first time in our history we have paid off all our debts. It is because of your vision and dedication. This isn't much but in case of emergencies this is all we have. It is a collection from all of us and all the money the school has. We are entrusting all of our futures to you.

G. W.

How much is here?

JOHN OGDEN

Four hundred dollars.

G. W.

God, I am sure, will bless it and it will be enough.

JOHN OGDEN

I think everyone is ready. You should get going.

John stands in the doorway and watches G. W. get into the wagon. People wave and cheer as the wagon passes them by.

EXT. SHIP - DAY

Title: **80 days later.**

Bell ringing.

The door to the lower hold opens and Dollie, and Winnie emerge to join Jessie and Marcos already on deck.

Everyone is wrapped with a blanket.

WINNIE

Did anyone think about the fact we were leaving in winter?

JESSIE

Wasn't winter when we left.

DOLLIE

I haven't been warm in a month. What was that bell for?

Everyone points to the front of the ship.

DOLLIE (CONT'D)
Is that land?

MARCOS
England. One of the crew told me.

WINNIE
How far away?

MARCOS
We should be in warm rooms tonight.

JESSIE
I can't believe my ancestors came
over on these ships.

MARCOS
Maybe they came over in the summer.

WINNIE
I'm not going back till summer. Hey
Dollie can we talk?

Walking away from the group

WINNIE (CONT'D)
I've been thinking about the whole
dream thing. I know you are singing
which is wonderful. I enjoy it also
but I never wanted to tour and
really I have just been doing
everything I can, hoping that I
would find something. That God
would put something on my heart.

DOLLIE
And has He?

WINNIE
I think so.

DOLLIE
And?

WINNIE
Have you heard about Liberia?

DOLLIE
The country?

WINNIE
Yes.

DOLLIE
In Africa?

WINNIE
It seems that the United States has started a country for people that want to go back to Africa. I hear it is set up the same as the United States but made for people of color.

DOLLIE
Your thinking of Africa?

WINNIE
I am thinking of Being like Miss Eve and Miss Alma.

DOLLIE
A teacher?

WINNIE
Yes, I really feel I should go to Africa and teach. I mean everyone needs education and I don't know, have you noticed how children seem drawn to me?

DOLLIE
It's kind of hard to miss.

WINNIE
So do you think I'm crazy?

DOLLIE
You're going to Africa.

WINNIE
After the tour I am going to study to be a teacher and get more information about it. Do you think that could be Gods will?

DOLLIE
(grabbing her hands)
If it's crazier than a March Hare, doesn't hurt anyone else, and you can't do it without his help, I'm pretty sure it's Gods will. And if its not. I'm sure he'll stop you anyway. Even if it's a step near to him I would say do it. Remember what Miss Alma said once.
(MORE)

DOLLIE (CONT'D)

If you're on a canoe, people on the bank can see where you are, they know where you've been but only you and God can see where you're going.

WINNIE

Well this is a pretty big canoe.

Dolly looks around the ship.

DOLLIE

Yes this is a pretty big canoe.

WINNIE

You better come visit.

DOLLIE

Just try to stop me. Africa?

They hug.

WINNIE

Africa.

A bell rings and they leave to join the others.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

The ship is moored and the gang plank is being set.

George walks down to the dock followed by the students.

There is a group of well dressed men by four carriages and a wagon.

A man in his late twenties PHILIP walks to the lower dock followed by a few others.

PHILIP

Mr. G. W., Mr. G. W.

G. W. waves from the plank.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Mr. G. W. Sir, my name is Philip and I am Sir Thomas's head valet. He has set myself and some of the staff to make sure you got to the hotel properly.

G. W.

Thank you.

PHILIP
If we might have your bags?

DOLLIE
You ain't getting my bag. I only
got one and I'm carrying it.

The whole group has disembarked the ship and are standing
together.

PHILIP
Pardon me ma'am but our master made
implicit orders that WE are to
attend to your every need.

WINNIE
Your master? Y'all are slaves?

PHILIP
Indentured ma'am. My grandfather
owed Sir Thomas's father a rather
large sum of money.

WINNIE
So you are paying off your
Grandfathers debt.

Philip nods.

DOLLIE
Well I have never seen a white
slave.

VALET
Pardon the intrusion ma'am but none
of us have ever seen a freed one.

PHILIP
You give us quite a bit of hope.
You all do, see?

Philip waves to the dock. Work has stopped as every man,
woman and child have the same look of longing and hope on
their face. These are the first freed slaves they have ever
seen. There is every color and gender. Every age.

There are few slave owners on the dock. Faces pursed, arms
crossed. They know their days are numbered.

DOLLIE
I would be quite honored if you
would help me with my luggage sir,
but as a gentleman, not as a
servant.

She hands her bag to Philip.

PHILIP
Thank you ma'am.

As he takes her bag the others hand theirs to the other valet's

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Please just set the rest in a pile.
They are well protected here. We
will get you into the carriages and
then load the wagon.

INT. ROYAL MUSIC THEATRE - EVENING

The house is full. There is murmuring.

Sir Thomas takes the stage and walks center.

SIR THOMAS
A number of months ago while in the
States I witnessed a performance...

There is a loud murmur in the crowd. Shielding his eyes Sir Thomas see's everyone standing and looking to a box on the side. This can only mean one thing.

The Queen.

The Queen nods her head to her subjects and they all bow to her. She takes a seat.

SIR THOMAS (CONT'D)
Ladies, and Gentlemen. Your
Highness, (bows) A number of months
ago while in the States I witnessed
a performance by a most
extraordinary vocal group. All
these performers where at one time
slaves and they sing the songs that
they once sang while toiling at
their duties. I hope that you will
be as enthralled by what they have
termed the Negro Spiritual as I was
when I first experienced it. So
without further ado may I introduce
the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

The curtain lifts and there is light applause.

Song to be selected and arranged later.

The crowd jumps to its feet in wild applause. Men and women have tears running down their cheeks. Shouts of "Well done" and "Bravo."

The queen motions to one of her entourage. She whispers something to him. He nods, bows, turns and leaves.

INT. SIDE STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The Queens aide walks up to Sir Thomas and whispers something to him.

Looking shocked he calls his stage hands together.

SIR THOMAS

The Queen has requested an audience. I will return shortly.

INT. QUEENS BOX - MOMENTS LATER

Sir Thomas walks in and bows to the Queen.

Motioning him to her she whispers to him.

With a concerned look on his face he nods, forces a smile, and kisses her ring.

INT. SIDE STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Walking into the side stage Sir Thomas frantically groups his stage hands together.

SIR THOMAS

The queen wants to meet the performers.

STAGE MANAGER

The Queen never meets performers.

SIR THOMAS

She wants to tonight.

STAGE MANAGER

Where?

SIR THOMAS

Here.

STAGE MANAGER

Here where?

SIR THOMAS
On the stage.

STAGE MANAGER
Are we going to wait for the house
to clear?

SIR THOMAS
We can't make her wait.

STAGE MANAGER
There's no other place.

SIR THOMAS
The dressing room is too small.

STAGE MANAGER
We cannot take her anywhere
backstage.

HAND
What about the store room? Its big
enough.

SIR THOMAS
That's a great idea.

STAGE MANAGER
What about the stuff in storage.

SIR THOMAS
I don't care. Throw it in the
alley.

STAGE MANAGER
The alley?

SIR THOMAS
Throw it anywhere. Set up some
carpets. The throne from King Lear.
Lanterns and do it now.

STAGE MANAGER
Come lads lets get it done.

The hands disappear and Sir Thomas looks out to the stage.

SIR THOMAS
Wow they're good.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

The group is coming in excited and talking to themselves.

DOLLIE

I think five encores might be a record for us.

JESSIE

Did you see the Queen?

WINNIE

I can't believe we just played for the Queen of England.

Coming in from the hallway.

SIR THOMAS

You're going to more than perform for her. Something extraordinary has happened.

G. W.

What's that?

SIR THOMAS

The Queen has requested an audience with you.

G. W.

When?

SIR THOMAS

Right now. Her exact words were. I would very much like to meet these young Negroes from the Colonies.

JESSIE

That's cute. She thinks we are from the colonies.

SIR THOMAS

Its not cute Sir. It's extraordinary. The Queen has never requested an audience with a performer before.

DOLLIE

Never?

SIR THOMAS

Never. In fact never in the history of the Crown has any Monarch ever met a performer.

G. W.

Where are we going to meet her?

SIR THOMAS
Her Highness? We have cleaned out a
storage room and prepared it for
her.

G. W.
When?

SIR THOMAS
Right now lets go.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The group is standing in the same position that they stand in
on the stage.

SIR THOMAS
When she enters men bow women
curtsy. She will sit and nod. That
is when you may stand. Let her
always talk first. Only one of you
talk at a time. No jokes.

Moments later.

QUEENS AIDE
Ladies and Gentlemen. Queen
Victoria the Crown Sovereign of the
Monarchy of England.

The queen walks in a looks around. Smiles at the performers
and takes her seat on the throne.

QUEEN VICTORIA
Sir Thomas is this the best you
have for these performers?

SIR THOMAS
We had to scramble for a room Your
Highness. My deepest apologies.

QUEEN VICTORIA
Next time we meet, you should come
to my palace.

The group looks at each other.

QUEEN VICTORIA (CONT'D)
You were all once slaves?

MARCOS
Yes, your highness.

QUEEN VICTORIA
Where are you from?

DOLLIE
We are from Nashville Tennessee
Ma'am.

QUEEN VICTORIA
I do not know where Nashville
Tennessee is but it must be a city
of music.

DOLLIE
Yes ma'am that it is.

QUEEN VICTORIA
What are your names?

DOLLIE
My name is Dollie.

WINNIE
My name is Winnie.

MARCOS
My name is Marcos your Highness.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SIDE STAGE - NIGHT

Title: **Nine weeks later.**

G. W. approaches Sir Thomas.

G. W.
We have made a change to our
introduction card. We hope this
would be fitting?

Sir Thomas looks at it.

SIR THOMAS
I am sure she will appreciate it
sir.

INT. ROYAL MUSIC THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Sir Thomas walks on stage and to much greater applause.

SIR THOMAS
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Turning to the Royal box

SIR THOMAS (CONT'D)
Your Highness.

He bows.

SIR THOMAS (CONT'D)
Nine weeks ago we had the honor to
introduce to Europe the most
astounding musical performers. This
evening we would like to again
introduce, on their final, string
of European performances. From the
city of music, Nashville Tennessee.

He turns and bows to the Queen.

She smiles and nods.

SIR THOMAS (CONT'D)
The Fisk Jubilee Singers.

The curtain raises and they sing the final song.

Song and arrangement to be decided later.

The End