

~~CONTINUED:~~~~NAT (CONT'D)~~

~~As I close, I urge you, brothers  
and sisters to take heart. For God  
is at work in your life. And he  
will not relent until the job is  
done. Amen?~~

~~ALL~~~~Amen-~~~~NAT~~~~Dismissed.~~

EXT. TURNER PLANTATION - BIG HOUSE - DAY

Nat and Cherry arrive to an arching oak. Nat lies down his  
vest for Cherry. They sit.

\*  
\*

NAT

I'm happy to see you.

CHERRY

I'm happy to see you.

NAT

You look beautiful.

CHERRY

Thank you...

\*

NAT

So much time passed... I battled  
thoughts that you might've been  
sold off...

(then)

How is it there?

CHERRY

It's fine. Nothing like what I come  
from 'for here. Most days I'm just  
tending to Missus Elizabeth, or  
fetchin' this or that for Miss  
Catherine.

NAT

You know if ya'll are coming back  
next week for church?

CHERRY

I know as much as you. I s'pose if  
Missus is suggestin' and Massa  
Reese don't mind the trip.

(CONTINUED)

NAT

I surely wouldn't want to wait  
another season to see you.

CHERRY

Me neither...

They study each other, spellbound. Nat extends his hand to her. ANGLE ON A CLOTH WRAPPED OBJECT. Cherry eyes Nat before unwrapping it to reveal NAT'S WOODEN TRIBAL RELIC.

NAT

My Nana got it from my granddaddy.  
She brought it here when she was  
taken from Africa.

CHERRY

Africa?

NAT

(nods)

She kept it hid. Said it was the  
one thing that kept her mind free.

CHERRY

It's pretty.

She offers it back.

NAT

I want you to have it.

(then)

In case I don't see you for a  
while, you'll have somethin'  
reminds you of me.

CHERRY

I don't know if it's right I take  
it. 'Sides I don't have nothin' to  
give you to remind you of me.

NAT

I spend all my time thinking about  
you already.

A frozen moment as they stare and smile. Until-

CATHERINE (O.C.)

Cherry?!

Cherry slowly stands. A warm smile before she disappears  
toward the Big House.

We stay with Nat as he looks and longs after her.

51 EXT. REESE PLANTATION - NIGHT

51

A farm house stands adjacent to a small barn- both set before a vast field. We spot Cherry who empties plates into a slop bucket near the back door.

She suddenly stops, turns.

CHERRY

Who's there?

CHERRY'S POV as she gazes into a thicket of trees until-

NAT SLOWLY EMERGES FROM THE TREELINE ATOP THE COAL BLACK HORSE, JUPITER.

Cherry nearly drops the plates. Nat climbs down.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Nat? What you doing here?

No answer. Nat walks boldly to her, his eyes glued to hers. He leans in, kisses her softly on her lips.

NAT

I shoulda' done that earlier today.

CHERRY

You came here to kiss me?

Nat slowly sinks to one knee.

NAT

I ain't got much. The Lord. My faith. Mamma. Nana. Up until now, it was enough. \*

(beat)

Cherry, I'd feel right honored if you'd be my wife. I'd treat you right. I'd protect you with my life... if you'd have me.

CHERRY

(smiles)

Yes. I will.

Nat rises. Kisses her lips again.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

What now?

NAT

I'll talk it over with Samuel. Get a cabin set up for us.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

CHERRY

OK.

A final kiss before Nat slowly backs away from her, shadows engulfing him into the night. Cherry smiles, breaths deep, as if for the first time.

52 EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - DAY

52

Nat and Cherry are knelt in front of Bridget who prays fervently. Nancy, Hark, Ester and a few others "lay hands" on Nat and Cherry's shoulders praying along silently in support.

53 INT. SLAVE QUARTERS - NAT'S CABIN - (NIGHT)

53

Nat and Cherry are in Nat's cabin. He gently **kisses** her as they make love. \*

54 EXT. TURNER PLANTATION - BIG HOUSE - DAY

54

Reverend Walthall climbs the porch steps. As he grabs the railing, it comes off into his hand. He carefully replaces it, continues to the door and knocks. Samuel arrives, pushes open the screen door.

SAMUEL TURNER

Reverend. What brings you around these parts during the week? Wouldn't expect to see you til Sunday.

REV. WALTHALL

There's never a wrong time to bring a blessing to a brother in Christ.

SAMUEL TURNER

Oh, Lord. Is this blessin' gonna cost me money?

REV. WALTHALL

Ha! Not a penny. The contrary in fact.

Sam joins him on the porch. They sit on adjacent rockers.

SAMUEL TURNER

Isaiah! Run some waters out here.

REV. WALTHALL

Gin, if you please.

(CONTINUED)