

M A N D I N G O

From the novel by  
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Second Revised Screenplay

by

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1

EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

1

WARREN MAXWELL and BROWNLEE stroll slowly through the compound of primitive shacks. The slaves -- men, women and children -- stand outside, summoned for inspection. They look anxious, afraid of being sold. Brownlee is a nervous, suspicious individual, mid-forties -- ready when necessary with insincere compliments and wheedling flattery. Maxwell, late fifties, rheumatic, testy and stubborn, is a man pleased with himself and his achievements but not to the point of smugness. He fancies himself decent and moral, a good and kind master to his slaves.

As they walk, Brownlee's eyes dart from slave to slave, appraising, evaluating. He stops from time to time to squeeze a slave's muscle, poke or prod a belly or leg. Maxwell watches silently, with some disdain. Brownlee puts his hand on one black's shoulder, pushes him to his knees, then wrenches the black's mouth open and examines his teeth.

BROWNLEE

You craves to sell him, Mista Maxwell?

Maxwell shakes his head. The black smiles, relieved. Brownlee moves on, stops before three young blacks, EMPEROR, BARBAROSA and CICERO. Brownlee examines Emperor, then Barbarosa, pulls and twists his fingers for past fractures, inspects the skin on the boy's back.

BROWNLEE

Shuck down yer pants.

The black does so and Brownlee then spreads the black's buttocks.

MAXWELL

You wastin' time... he ain't got hemmoroids.

Brownlee feels the genital organ.

BROWNLEE

You alter some of 'em?

MAXWELL

(indignant)

My Pa never altered a nigger  
... nor have I. On this  
plantation, there ain't an

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

MAXWELL (cont'd)  
altered horse or nigger. Ifn  
the bucks run a'skeared of  
that, I wouldn't be blamin'  
them.

Brownlee turns to Cicero, inspects him. Cicero is tall, powerfully built, with clear eyes and chiseled features, about 24. There is a sense of pride and a smouldering defiance about him. Brownlee sees the letter R branded into Cicero's back. Brownlee looks quizzically at Maxwell.

MAXWELL  
(nodding)  
This buck, Cicero, a runner.  
An' he talks a lot, talks,  
preaches, stops the others  
from doin'. Else he's a  
prime worker. Jest might  
sell him fer a right price.

Brownlee picks up a piece of wood, hurls it beyond a hedge.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED - (2):

1

BROWNLEE

(to Cicero)

Go... fetch!

Cicero hesitates, resisting. Then a canny glint enters his eyes and he decides to obey. He runs, crosses a clearing, leaps over a hedge and retrieves the stick. Brownlee watches attentively.

BROWNLEE

Moves fas'... a sound buck.  
Good fer the sugar cane. Might  
last seven, eight years...

Cicero drops the stick at Brownlee's feet with a veiled glance of contempt.

BROWNLEE

Fifteen hundred for the three.  
This one an' them two.

MAXWELL

Twenty-five hundred.

BROWNLEE

Done.

Maxwell smiles, pleased with the price. Cicero, standing behind the two white men, smiles, too, glad to be sold.

2 EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

2

The house is a nine-room, clapboard structure -- unimpressive for a plantation the size of Falconhurst. It is badly in need of paint and repair. Maxwell and Brownlee are walking toward it when HAMMOND MAXWELL, on horseback, rides up to the two men, dismounts. He is an overly serious young man in his early twenties, gentle, somewhat shy. He walks with a limp, his knee permanently rigid. He greets his father with a kiss.

HAMMOND

Papa... the river's close to  
floodin' the banks.

MAXWELL

(smiling)

My son, Hammond, here cain't git it  
in his haid... Falconhurst a nigger  
farm... not a cotton plantation.  
Cotton is jest somethin' to keep 'em  
busy, so they won't set aroun' and  
get ideas.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL (cont'd)  
 (to Hammond, fondly)  
 Ham, I don't give a damn if  
 the cotton goes underwater.  
 The ground don't yield enough  
 worth fussin' about. Ham, this  
 is Mista Brownlee.

Hammond and Brownlee shake hands.

HAMMOND  
 Right charmed by the honor of  
 your company.

BROWNLEE  
 Right charmed my own self.

MAXWELL  
 Mista Brownlee's a trader.

Brownlee bristles at the note of contempt in Maxwell's voice.

BROWNLEE  
 You goin' to have slaves, you  
 got to have traders.

MAXWELL  
 (chuckles)  
 That right. You cain't eat 'em  
 an' you cain't plow 'em under.

ACHILLES, a black, teenage boy, comes running up to the three men.

ACHILLES  
 Masta Maxwell, suh... Doc  
 Redfield come!

3 INT. LUCY'S HUT - SLAVE QUARTERS - DAY

3

BIG PEARL lies weakly on a crude bed -- actually a mound of rags. She is attended by her mother, LUCY. Big Pearl is the color of burnished copper, tall and firm, a beautiful, a pure-bred Mandingo girl of fourteen. Lucy is fattish, but a still handsome Mandingo woman, about thirty-five. Big Pearl groans as the veterinary, DOC REDFIELD, a small man with a modest beard, examines her, looks at her tongue.

(CONTINUED)

REDFIELD

(to Lucy)

If she has vomit or temperature,  
she got to be isolated.

LUCY

No'um, Doc Redfiel'... nuthin'  
like that.

Hammond, Brownlee and Maxwell enter the hut.

HAMMOND

Whut ails Big Pearl, Doc  
Redfield?

MAXWELL

(to Brownlee)

Doc Redfield the bes' vetinary  
anywhure aroun' here.

Hammond goes over to Big Pearl and Redfield.

REDFIELD

She a virgin?

HAMMOND

Reckon... but you never sure  
about a black wench.

REDFIELD

Lucy?

He looks at Lucy who is alarmed and apprehensive.

LUCY

She pure... I been savin' her  
like Masta Maxwell tell me.

MAXWELL

A Mandingo wench... you don't  
let jest any buck git to her.

Redfield turns back to Big Pearl, eyes her distrustfully.

REDFIELD

Big Pearl? You the only one  
tell us mos' certain.

Big Pearl, frightened by the attention and presence  
of all the white men, nods numbly.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED - (2):

3

REDFIELD

Well, nothin' the matter with  
the wench 'cept she a-craving  
... in the bud of heat. She's  
hipped, plumb hipped.

Maxwell is delighted by the diagnosis, laughs heartily,  
slaps Brownlee on the back.

MAXWELL

Cle Doc Redfield... nothin' he  
don't know about nigger nature,  
nigger symptoms!

Redfield turns to Hammond.

REDFIELD

Hammond, you pleasure her, son,  
she git better. You don't, she  
fall off...

Hammond is startled by Redfield's advice, then seems  
disconcerted, confused. He looks at Big Pearl uneasily.  
Big Pearl, fearfully, makes a crude, cunning attempt  
to dissuade Hammond.

BIG PEARL

(halting)

I too black, Masta, suh... I  
not fitten' fo' you...

MAXWELL

It's a master's duty to pleasure  
the wenches the first time, son.

Big Pearl, terrified, bursts into tears. She bounds  
off the bed and runs out the door. Brownlee turns  
to watch her.

BROWNLEE

(admiringly)

Pure Mandingo! You got bucks,  
too?

MAXWELL

I'd pay three thousand dollars  
for a Mandingo buck. Need one  
to breed her.

The dining room is immense, bare of furniture except for a rectangular dining table and an ornate Empire sideboard, cluttered with rococo silver and glass. In the center of the table is a tall, revolving silver caster with jars of condiments and pickles. The plates and coffee cups are huge. A pair of twin boys, MEG and ALPH, about four feet tall, stand waving frayed peacock feather fans to keep flies away from the table. They have closely shorn skulls, are shabbily clad, half-naked with their seats showing through the holes in their pants. Maxwell, Brownlee, Redfield and Hammond are finishing the first course of the meal -- chicken, ham and peas.

MAXWELL

(to Hammond)

When I was your age, there weren't no fourteen-year-old virgins round Falconhurst.

(to Brownlee and Redfield)

Hammond craves the bright-skinned ones.

(to Hammond)

Course, iff'n you don't hanker fer Big Pearl...

HAMMOND

(blushing)

I hanker... but she's powerful musky.

REDFIELD

No need fer musk to bother you. Jest soak 'em good in manganate of potash water.

LUCREZIA BORGIA, a robust, vigorous black woman in her forties, enters carrying a tray with a platter of fifteen fried eggs, starts serving them. Maxwell looks toward the pantry, annoyed.

MAXWELL

(shouting)

Mem, you black scoun'rel. Git in here and help Lucrezia Borgia!

(to Lucrezia Borgia)

Tell how many suckers you brung us, Lucrezia Borgia.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Twenty-four.

MAXWELL

(proudly)

Twenty-four. These twins two of 'em. But she bred out now, too old.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

4

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Nah, suh... I knocked up agin.

MAXWELL

Bless my soul! Got a silver  
dollar, Ham?

Hammond gives her a silver dollar. Maxwell beams, then  
looks toward the pantry again.

MAXWELL

(shouting)

I'm callin' you, Agamemnon! I'm  
beggin' you to step fas'...

HAMMOND

Papa... papa... don't git yourself  
riled. It ain't good fer your  
rheumatiz.

AGAMEMNON enters -- he is past thirty, broad-shouldered,  
yellow-skinned, canny and intelligent. He carries a  
pitcher of milk which he proceeds to pour into glasses  
on the table.

MAXWELL

I'll git Masta Hammond to pull  
a piece of hide offn you...

AGAMEMNON

No, Masta, don' ride me. Please,  
suh, I be spry.

His response seems to satisfy Maxwell.

BROWNLEE

You have any religion for your  
niggers, Mista Maxwell?

MAXWELL

Hell, no! More religion they  
gits, the ornrrier they gits, harder  
to drive.

REDFIELD

Don't worry none about they  
immortal souls?

MAXWELL

They got no immortal souls.  
They git thinkin' they got  
souls, git to thinkin' they's  
good as white folks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED - (2):

4

MAXWELL (cont'd)  
(to Agamemnon)  
Mem, you reckon you got a soul?

AGAMEMNON  
(overplaying it)  
A lazy, no-count, stupid,  
godfersaken nigger like me  
cain't have a soul, Masta.

Maxwell smiles, corroborated, oblivious to Agamemnon's  
ircny.

BROWNEE  
Some people think they got  
souls... go to heaven, too.

Maxwell snorts with indignation.

MAXWELL  
You a-goin' to fly about up  
there, a-flappin' your wings and  
a-pickin' your harp amongst a lot  
of stinkin' black angels? I  
ain't. I ain't goin' if I got  
to sing in no choir with 'em.

BROWNEE  
Well, I s'pose there'd be a piece  
of heaven fenced off fer 'em,  
'less they kindly serves and  
waits on the whites. I don't  
know, maybe they turn white when  
they die and ascend.

MAXWELL  
Even God cain't make a white man  
out of no nigger. It jest ain't  
in Him.

REDFIELD  
Them abolitionists up North  
tellin' us they's good as whites.

MAXWELL  
Them sons-a-bitches! Slavery  
was ordained by God, by God  
hisself. Niggers are right  
happy eatin', workin', fornicatin'.  
Abolitionists! Cranks an' loonies!  
Triffin' loafers, interferin' in  
other folks' business...

HAMMOND  
(admonishing)  
Papa... your rheumatiz...!

(CONTINUED)

# CONTINUED - (3):

4

MAXWELL

[ Damn my rhumatizi! Don't do this  
and don't do that. It gits  
worse whatever I do or quit  
doin'! ]

He reaches toward his father, rubs his hand fondly.

BROWNLEE

Sleepin' with one of them nekid  
Mexican dogs... they do say...  
dreens the rheumatiz right out  
of the man into the dog.

REDFIELD

A nigger jest as good.  
(looks at the twins)  
One of them dreen off the rheumatiz  
good as any nekid dog. Course,  
you got to have the nigger sort  
of curl up aroun' your feet, and  
you got to press hard and kindly  
force the rheumatiz right out'n  
the soles.

Maxwell looks speculatively at Alph, considering trying  
the remedy. Hammond rises.

HAMMOND

Papa, I'm goin'.  
(to Lucrezia Borgia)  
Tell Lucy to git Big Pearl ready.

MAXWELL

Right glad to hear it, son.

Hammond kisses his father, leaves limping.

BROWNLEE

A good boy. [ Look like he be  
a right vigorous stud. ]

MAXWELL

[ Ham got two, three babies. They  
fancy, light-yallers. ] I jest  
want to live long enough to  
marry him to some young lady  
of nice family, carry on the  
Maxwell name. But he's shy  
about his leg. When he was  
six years old... year after  
his ma died... a gelding threw  
him off an' step on his knee.

5 INT. LUCY'S HUT - DAY

5

Big Pearl, naked, sits in a wooden tub of red-colored water, anxious and trembling. Lucrezia Borgia and Lucy rub her body with a cloth. The two older women are grim, distressed.

LUCRECIA BORGIA

You jes' do ever'thin' like he  
say, ever'thin'. An' don' let no  
farts, no diff'rence how yo' feels.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

LUCREZIA BORGIA (cont'd)

An' don' fergit to say thankee,  
whether he give you nuffin' or  
not.

LUCY

(sarcastic)

You s'pose to reckon it a  
prideful honor... white masta  
takin' you fust.

BIG PEARL

This stuff smell awful, Mama.

LUCY

Smell good to white noses.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

I heard Doc Redfiel' talkin'...  
say a manganated wench stay  
sweet-smellin' fer two days.

BIG PEARL

I be smellin' like this fer two  
days!

LUCY

Hush up! I tol' you not to let  
on you sick!

LUCREZIA BORGIA

(shaking her head)

Cain't hide from the white masta  
... they waitin', watchin', wantin'  
... oncet they see a wench tittie  
out, they think yo' ready...

Big Pearl begins to cry. Lucy takes her head, nestles  
it against her body, sadly, lovingly.

6 EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - SUNSET

6

Hammond heads for Lucy's hut. Meg dogs his footsteps  
and Hammond orders him away. The entire black community  
watches Hammond from behind the bushes, the cabins.  
Everyone knows where he is going, what he is going to do.

7 INT. LUCY'S HUT - SUNSET

7

Hammond enters. Big Pearl is sitting on the bed now.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Lucy and Lucrezia Borgia stand near her.

HAMMOND

All right, Lucy, Lucrezia  
Borgia, you kin go.

LUCY

(to Big Pearl)  
You ack like I tol' you.

BIG PEARL

Yas, mama.

The two women leave. Hammond takes off his jacket, then his pistol. He still hasn't looked at Big Pearl, seems hesitant, unsure. Finally, he limps over to her, gazes at her silently. She lies back, rigid with fright.

HAMMOND

Mayhap I'll hurt you a little.

Big Pearl responds with a barely perceptible nod.

HAMMOND

You glad about this, Big Pearl?  
(waits)  
Big Pearl?

BIG PEARL

Sho', Masta Hammon'... Mama say...

She stops in mid-sentence.

HAMMOND

Whut she say!?

BIG PEARL

She say... she say... it be  
right joyful.

Hammond nods, satisfied, begins to remove his trousers. For a moment, Big Pearl seems relieved that her lie was believed -- then the fear returns to her eyes.

8 EXT. LUCY'S HUT - SUNSET

8

Eoy is trying to spy into the hut. Woman takes him by the ear and drags him away.

9 INT. STABLE - NIGHT

9

Cicero stands glaring at Agamemnon, Barbarosa,

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

Emperor. He is chained to the wall, shackled at the ankle. Except for Agamemnon, the others are also chained. They lie or sit on straw pallets. Agamemnon sits in one corner. The stable is lit by lanternlight.

CICERO

How you feel sittin' chained  
while the white man walk about,  
do his

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CICERO (cont'd)  
 pleasure with a black girl.  
 Mayhap you don' have feelin's  
 like the white man say... or  
 feelin's like dumb animals  
 that don' matter nohow.

BARBAROSA  
 (overlapping)  
 Whut we s'pose to do...?!

CICERO  
 Whut you do is... all you kin do  
 now is, think 'about it, hate it  
 an' feel the hate good an'  
 remember that hate an' feed it.  
 An' you save it fer when you  
 goin' to use it. When we rise  
 up an' smite the white man,  
 like God's chosen people done  
 smite they enemies.

BARBAROSA  
 That never happen, Cicero.

CICERO  
 It happen. It happen a'ready.  
 It happen agin. It got to  
 happen. God never create  
 slaves... He create men, all  
 standin' upright in His eyes.  
 God tol' Moses to lead his  
 people from the bondage of  
 Egypt.

AGAMEMNON  
 (quietly)  
 In Africa... our people was  
 born free...

CICERO  
 Tha's right. Free men... not  
 slaves... mastas our own selves  
 ... of the earth an' the forest  
 an' the rivers. You reckon the  
 white man don' know that deep  
 down, know we is human as he is?  
 Whut fer you reckon they keep us  
 from readin', learnin', religion?  
 Cuz they know, they afeared we  
 is human. Mem, you brung that  
 copy-out page?

Agamemnon nods, rises, reaches into his pocket.



9A INT. LUCY'S HUT - NIGHT

9A

The hut is dimly lit by a lantern. Hammond is pulling on his jacket, picks up his pistol. Big Pearl lies on the bed, face down. Hammond gives her one last, gentle look and leaves. Lucy enters.

LUCY

He have to whup you?

BIG PEARL

No'um.

She begins to sob desperately

10 EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

10

Hammond walks back toward the house. Passing the stable, he notices a light filtering beneath the door. Curious, he walks over to investigate.

11 INT. STABLE - NIGHT

11

Agamemnon is reading the prayer crudely printed in oversize block letters on a sheet of paper. Cicero stands near Agamemnon, reading over his shoulder.

AGAMEMNON

(reading with a  
beginner's difficulty)

O Lord, our God, other Lords  
beside thee have had dominion  
over us...

Hammond enters, unseen and unheard, conceals himself in the shadows near the door.

AGAMEMNON

... but by thee only will we  
make mention of thy name...

Agamemnon mispronounces the word "mention." Cicero corrects him.

CICERO

No... mention... mention... it  
mean to speak.

Hammond steps out of concealment. The blacks gape at him, terror-stricken. Only Cicero seems composed, unruffled. Agamemnon hides the sheet of paper behind his back.

HAMMOND

(raging)

Whut you doin' here, Mem?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

Agamemnon is speechless. Hammond snatches the paper from him, scans it.

HAMMOND

You kin read! An' write! Who learned you, Mem?!

Agamemnon is still tongue-tied. Hammond, realizing, turns to Cicero.

HAMMOND

It was you, huh, Cicero?

Cicero, looking straight at Hammond, says nothing.

HAMMOND

My papa done well to sell you.

He grabs Agamemnon by the arm, shoves him roughly toward the door.

HAMMOND

Readin'! You know whut you kin git fer readin'?!

He leaves. Agamemnon follows him, looking sick and frightened.

12 INT. MAXWELL'S BEDROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT 12

Maxwell lies in bed. Doc Redfield, assisted by Lucrezia Borgia, is twisting the completely naked Alph around Maxwell's feet. The boy takes it all as a great game.

REDFIELD

(to Maxwell)

You got to keep your feet pressed hard on his belly... so the rheumatiz dreens right outn the soles.

Hammond enters.

HAMMOND

Papa, I got to peel Mem's rump.

MAXWELL

Whut he done? I'd send the lazy son-of-a-bitch to market if he weren't such a good stock boy. All he good fer is to pester the wenchies.

Hammond hesitates, then decides not to tell the whole story.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

Jest gittin' too uppity.

Maxwell gives Hammond a skeptical, piercing glance.

MAXWELL

You protectin' him agin? Whut  
he do now, Ham?

Redfield picks up his bag.

REDFIELD

Good night, all.  
(to Alph)  
You stay curled up there, boy.

He smacks Alph's rump.

MAXWELL

Thankee, Doc.

Redfield leaves, followed by Lucrezia Borgia. Maxwell  
rivets his eyes on Hammond, waiting for an answer.

HAMMOND

(finally)  
I ketches Mem readin'... he  
kin read!

Maxwell, outraged, jerks upright in bed. Alph makes  
a desperate effort to hang on, twisted about Maxwell's  
feet.

MAXWELL

READIN'! That dumb-ass, block-  
head nigger readin'! Know whut  
ole Sam Thomas do with readin'  
niggers?! Puts out an eye...  
cures 'em good. One-eye, not  
two... blind one's no damn use  
but one-eyed kin work as hard  
an' don' give no more trouble.

HAMMOND

No, Papa... no. I'll jest whup  
hin.

MAXWELL

Tain't enough.

HAMMOND

That's all, Papa... a larrupin'.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED - (2):

12

MAXWELL

Then you whup him fierce... cut deep cuza nigger don' feel physical punishment soon as a white man. An' you rub in the pimentade after. Hurts like hell but heals the scares right clean. Tell Lucrezia Borgia to use fresh red pepper, fresh lemon in the pimentade -- and plenty of salt.

Hammond nods, but doesn't look very happy about the prospect.

13 INT. HAMMOND'S BEDROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

13

Hammond enters with Agamemnon. DITE, Hammond's mulatto concubine, a slender, well-formed girl about fifteen, stands by the bed, holding a quilt around herself.

DITE

Yo' wants me in the bed, Masta?

HAMMOND

Jest warm them sheets up. I'm tired, Dite.

Dite drops the quilt and, naked, plumps herself gaily on the feather bed. Hammond begins to undress near the blazing fire. Agamemnon assists him.

HAMMOND

Whut that Cicero tellin' you?

AGAMEMNON

(hesitates, then  
evasively)

He talk 'bout Africa... they's big forests, lots of animals... runnin' free... 'bout leopards...

HAMMOND

Iffn' I tol' my Papa everythin' I heard... the religion, copyin' from the Bible... he'd sell you along with Cicero.

AGAMEMNON

(ingratiating)

You pray for Mamnon tonight, Masta?

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

Ain't no use me prayin' to God  
fer you... seein' you do it  
fer your own self.

(then relenting)

Mayhap tomorrow... after you  
been whupped. Now git.

AGAMEMNON

Yes, Masta, suh.

He goes.

DITE

[ Masta, suh.

HAMMOND

Whut you wantin', Dite?

DITE

Masta, I knocked up.

HAMMOND

I been a-lookin' fer that. ]

DITE

Masta, when my sucker come,  
cain't I keeps it?

HAMMOND

(shaking his head)

It's fer yer own good, Dite.  
So's you won't feel bad iff'n  
we go to sell it.

He kneels at the bed, clasps his hands.

HAMMOND

Now I lay me down to sleep. I  
pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray [the Lord my soul to take.  
Dear God, bless my Mama up in  
Heaven; bless my papa and dreen  
his rheumatiz into Alph; bless  
Big Pearl; bless Dite; bless  
Lucrezia Borgia and the twins;  
and, God, bless Falconhurst,  
and all the niggers on the  
plantation. Amen. ]

14 EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

14

Brownlee is finishing tying ropes about the necks of the three purchased slaves, while a dozen or so other slaves look on sadly. One BLACK WOMAN breaks from the crowd, runs to Emperor, clutches him desperately, sobbing. A SECOND WOMAN, emboldened by the first, runs to Barbarosa, embraces him. Brownlee continues his rope-tying, glances indifferently at the grief-stricken blacks.

Hammond comes out of the house. He holds a paddle in his hand. He walks toward Brownlee and the slaves.

HAMMOND

Good luck, Mr. Brownlee.

BROWNLEE

[Wish I could stay fer the larrupin'.  
I sees lots of niggers larruped,  
but I always admires to see it.  
It's kind of comical like... that  
is, if it has to be done anyways.)  
Well, thankee fer the hospitality.  
You git to New Orleans, you come  
see me.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

He climbs into the saddle and starts to move off, the three slaves walking behind him. Hammond walks along with the slaves for a few paces. The two black women who embraced Emperor and Barbarosa remain behind, weeping.

HAMMOND

Emp, Bar... you behave like good bucks.

(to Cicero)

You plannin' to keep preachin' up trouble?

CICERO

Whure I kin, Masta Hammon'.

Hammond frowns, shakes his head in resigned disapproval. He halts, watches Brownlee and the slaves leave. Then he turns and walks toward the stable.

15 INT. STABLE - DAY

15

Agamemnon lies on the stable floor while NAPOLEON, a stout, nineteen-year-old, knots a rope about his ankles. The rope hangs from a pulley nailed to a rafter. Meg watches, excited, folding a wad of cloth. Hammond enters.

HAMMOND

Haul him up, Pole.

Napoleon takes hold of the other rope end and starts pulling. Agamemnon is dragged shrieking across the floor and hoisted into the air until he is swinging free of the ground, hanging upside-down. Napoleon ties the rope to a hook. Hammond seems uneasy, his resolve faltering.

MEG

Y' sure looks funny a-hangin'.

He glances at Hammond, then stuffs the cloth in Agamemnon's mouth to muffle any screams. Hammond stands uncertainly.

HAMMOND

Now, stand off from him, so like. An' aim fer his bottom. Gits it down on his legs, it won't hurt none, but don't slam his back.

NAPOLEON

Yes, suh, Masta.

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED:

15

HAMMOND

I'll tell you when to start an  
stop you when I ready fer you  
to stop.

(hands him paddle)

Go ahead.

Napoleon begins to beat Agamemnon with the paddle.  
Agamemnon writhes, twitches in pain, begins to bleed.  
Hammond suddenly seems repelled.

Hammond turns and strides out of the stable.

16

EXT. STABLE - DAY

16

In the bright daylight, Hammond's face is drawn, pasty

(CONTINUED)



16 CONTINUED:

16

white. He walks blindly away from the stable with slow, heavy steps, finally stops. He turns back, then turns away, hardly moving from the same spot.

17 INT. STABLE - DAY

17

Napoleon is still whacking Agamemnon but with flagging energy and enthusiasm. CHARLES WOODFORD enters. He is a young fop, about twenty, dressed in ruffled but once fashionable clothing.

CHARLES

You ain't doin' that right...

He tears the paddle from Napoleon's hands and slams it several times against Agamemnon's backside. Hammond returns, is astonished to see this stranger beating Agamemnon.

HAMMOND

(raging)

Who you... to touch my niggers?!

He rips the paddle away from Charles.

CHARLES

You don't recognize me, Cousin Hammond. We was little 'uns. I'm Charles, Major Woodford's son from Crowfoot Plantation.

He smiles disarmingly at Hammond.

18 EXT. VERANDA - FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

18

Maxwell sits on a veranda chair. The twin Alph comes gambolling toward him. But as soon as he reaches Maxwell, he begins to walk hunched and twisted, groaning.

ALPH

Cooch... ooooh! Masta's misery dreened right through my belly.

MAXWELL

You lyin' little buck... I kin still feel the rheumatiz.

Hammond comes out of the house.

MAXWELL

Whure's Charles?

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

A-stuffin' hisself with  
Lucrezia Borgia's vittles.

ALPH

(moaning)

I hurts awful.

Maxwell grabs Alph by the arm, pulls him down to his feet.

MAXWELL

You git down here.

Maxwell kicks off his slippers, puts his feet on the boy's belly, sighs with relief.

MAXWELL

(to Hammond)

Major Woodford, Charles' Pa,  
is bad pressed. Charles come  
with a letter from him --  
askin' to borrow money.

HAMMOND

You a-mind to?

MAXWELL

(slyly)

May hap... iffn you take to  
Charles' little sister, Cousin  
Blanche.

Hammond scowls, aware of what his father is leading up to.

HAMMOND

Papa...

MAXWELL

It time to be a-thinkin' of an  
heir fer Falconhurst, Ham. An'  
you need a white lady to give you  
a son with human blood... not  
them suckers of yourn from wenches.

HAMMOND

I wouldn't know whut to do... with  
a white lady, Papa.

MAXWELL

You jest asts her Papa kin you asts  
her, he says yes, then you up and  
asts her. All there is to it.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

(interrupting)

I mean goin' to bed... mayhap  
she won't let you.

MAXWELL

You loves her up an' kisses her  
an' she lets you all right  
at las'...

HAMMOND

I ain't no good at kissin'.

MAXWELL

You don't kiss the wenches, I  
know that. White ladies, though,  
you has to kiss.

HAMMOND

An' you cain't have no more  
wenches if'n you're married.

MAXWELL

Course, have wenches, jest the  
same. You doesn't talk about 'em  
fronten' your wife, but she knows  
you have 'em. She wants you  
should have 'em. Saves her from  
havin' to submit. When she do  
submit, though, you keep on your  
shirt an' drawers. Plague a  
white lady mos' to death to see  
a man nekid.

HAMMOND

Not in New Orleans. There's white  
ladies there, I heared... strip  
all off... everythin'.

MAXWELL

Whores!

(pauses, then firmly)

Ham, jest go an' take a look at  
Cousin Blanche. If'n she ain't  
to yer taste, we kin look around  
at other white ladies.

(an afterthought)

An' poor Major Woodford don't  
git the money.

He chuckles. Hammond looks distressed.

Hammond and Charles travel in a surrey along the plan-  
tation-lined roads. Charles' horse, tied to the rig,  
trots behind.

20 EXT. BANK OF THE MISSISSIPPI - DAY

20

The surrey speeds by carts laden with cotton bales. Blacks perch on top of the bales as they take their masters' wares to the boats.

20A EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

20A

A coffle of twenty slaves, chained together in pairs, are on their way to the New Orleans slave market. At the head of the column are two unchained slaves. One is a fiddler PLAYING a lively tune, the other carries an American flag. The coffle is accompanied by two white men on horseback, one at the front of the column, the other bringing up the rear. The surrey, going in the same direction as the slave coffle, approaches and passes it.

21 INT. WALLACE PLANTATION - DAY

21

The surrey approaches a group of buildings. Hammond.

(CONTINUED)

draws up outside the largest. WALLACE, a gruff but amiable man of sixty, comes out. He takes the reins of the horses, greets Hammond warmly.

WALLACE

Mista Hammond! How's your Pa?

HAMMOND

All cripples up with the rheumatiz, Mista Wallace. This my cousin Charles Woodford from Crowfoot.

WALLACE

Make yourself, welcome, Mista Woodford. Come right in.

They walk toward the house.

WALLACE

This a social call, Mista Hammond, or you got something on your mind?

HAMMOND

Both I reckon.

INT. DINING ROOM - WALLACE PLANTATION - NIGHT

Hammond, Charles and Wallace are just finishing supper, served by an elderly BLACK WOMAN.

HAMMOND

Your old Mandingo buck, my Papa craves to borrow him fer breedin'.

WALLACE

Old Xerxes... he's dead. A bull gored him two, three months ago.

HAMMOND

(disappointed)  
My Pa was hopin'...

CHARLES

They make the best fightin' niggers... Mandingos.

HAMMOND

I crave one my own self, a good one, one that kin whup anybody.

WALLACE

You're jest like your Pa. Warren Maxwell was always Mandingo mad.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

He laughs. Hammond starts to laugh with him.

23 INT. BEDROOM - WALLACE PLANTATION - NIGHT

23

A large, shabby room, illuminated by a single candle. The furniture, chiefly walnut, is ugly and decrepit. Hammond and Charles watch expectantly as Wallace holds the door open, admitting two young black girls, KATY and ELLEN. They're about fourteen or fifteen, clad in long shifts reaching from neck to ankle. Katy is fat, moon-faced, impassive. Ellen is pretty, a bit plump. She seems apprehensive, vulnerable.

WALLACE

Katy and Ellen. I hope they're to your liking.

CHARLES

Suit me fine.

WALLACE

Good night, then.

He goes. Charles seizes the candle, examines the girls closely, squeezing breasts and bottoms with no regard for the girls' feelings. Katy accepts it stoically. But Ellen, filled with shame, tries to avoid the exploring fingers. Hammond observes her reaction.

HAMMOND

You a virgin?

Ellen nods shyly.

CHARLES

This one ain't, eh, Katy? Cousin Hammond, you take the virgin. I don't care fer hard work.

He grabs Katy and wildly fastens his lips on hers.

HAMMOND

(astonished)

Cousin Charles! You kissin' on the mouth?

Then Charles rips off Katy's shift, thrusts the naked girl across the bed, face downwards, and smacks her on the bottom. He takes off his belt and begins thrashing the girl's seat. She screams.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

HAMMOND

Whut you do that fer?

CHARLES

Makes a man feel good. She likes it, too, doesn't you, purty wench?

KATY

(scared)

Yas, suh, Masta.

Charles continues the beating. Hammond and Ellen see in each other's eyes a shared disgust at the spectacle. Hammond turns and walks toward a door to a connecting bedroom.

24

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - WALLACE PLANTATION - NIGHT

24

A room like the other. Hammond enters, gazes about the room. Ellen follows in, closes the door behind her, stands unmoving. Hammond walks to the bed, sits down.

HAMMOND

You don't like whut Charles doin'?

ELLEN

(faintly)

No, Masta.

HAMMOND

I don't like it neither... make me sick.

He turns to look at her, catches her gazing curiously at him before she quickly looks away.

HAMMOND

Why you lookin' odd-like at me, sneaky-like? Whut fer?

Ellen shakes her head mutely, apprehensively. Hammond glares at her suspiciously.

HAMMOND

You tell me... and no fibs.  
You tell me! My leg?

Hammond's question -- his sensitivity about his leg -- forces Ellen to speak, to banish the misunderstanding.

ELLEN

(hesitant)

Jes'... that... you be... strange  
... fer a white man.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

Strangel

ELLEN

Keerin' whut a white man do to  
a wench.

Hammond laughs, relieved.

HAMMOND

Kin you help me take off these  
boots?

Eager to please, Ellen kneels before Hammond, tugs off  
the boots. Hammond starts massaging his game leg.

ELLEN

Whut happen to yo' leg, Masta?

HAMMOND

(surprised)

No wench ever ast that straight  
out honest. They always preten'  
they don't see.

He is touched and pleased by her directness and felt  
sympathy which seems to encourage an openness in him.  
He rises, limps about the room.

HAMMOND

I do walk bad.

ELLEN

I thinks you walks jes' fine,  
Masta.

Hammond laughs ruefully. But he believes she means it,  
convinced by her earlier honesty. A rare moment -- he  
feels free of his infirmity, unashamed. He gazes at  
her with intense concentration, realizing her beauty,  
his eyes lost in her face and form.

HAMMOND

Raise your head.

(waits)

Raise your head.

Ellen does, but with her head turned away from him, her  
eyes averted.

HAMMOND

No... I cain't see you... you  
a-lookin' away...

(CONTINUED)



She brings her head around, facing him, but still keeps her eyes downcast.

HAMMOND

Put your eyes on me. Look me straight... into my eyes.

ELLEN

(trembling)

I cain't, Masta.

HAMMOND

I craves you to do it, Ellen.

ELLEN

(halting)

... Niggers... don't...

HAMMOND

Don't whut... look a white man in the eyes? Iffn you tol' to do it, ast to do it... you kin do it.

He takes her hand gently.

HAMMOND

Ellen?

Finally, fearfully she raises her eyes and looks directly into his. They stand gazing solemnly into each other's eyes -- a long, deep communication that seems to awe and astonish them. Tenderly -- and crudely -- Hammond begins to caress her body. She shudders.

HAMMOND

Don't be afeared.

She begins to weep.

HAMMOND

(puzzled)

You cryin' like a white lady. You don't like me, you don't have to stay.

ELLEN

I like you, Masta. I want to please you, suh.

Hammond touches her cheek, feels her wet face. Compassionately, he suddenly kisses her on the cheek -- startling himself by his impulsive, uncharacteristic

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED - (3):

24

action. More amazed, he realizes he'd like to kiss her lips. He runs his fingertips around the outline of her mouth, then begins to kiss her again and again.

25 EXT. WALLACE PLANTATION - DAY

25

Hammond shakes hands with Wallace and starts walking to the surrey where Charles sits, smoking a cigar. Hammond spies Ellen peeping at him from a corner of the building. He walks to her, smiles.

HAMMOND

I crave to say goodbye.

She stares at him silently, despair in her eyes.

HAMMOND

(blurting it out)

I'm gittin' married...

Ellen says nothing. Hammond sees the love and gratitude in her face. The emotional current between them is vibrant.

HAMMOND

Mayhap I'm gittin' married. I'm not sure. I never seen her growed up.

Embarrassed, choked with feeling, he turns abruptly and strides toward the surrey. Ellen watches him whip the horses and ride off.

26 EXT. SLAVE MARKET - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

26

A large sign across a cabin identifies the chaotic scene -- "Maspero's Exchange - Slaves and Mules." Hundreds of slaves, all ages and both sexes, are crammed in scores of stalls and hutches. Buyers and sellers shout, bargain, comment boisterously -- a Babel of voices. Whites lead slaves away tied with long ropes. Brownlee, Hammond and Charles push their way through the swarm of people. They pass a white man tied to a whipping post, bare to the waist, his back bloody and welted from flogging. Hammond looks at the man, turns to Brownlee.

HAMMOND

What he do?

BROWNLEE

Abolitionist.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

They ketch him preachin'?

BROWNLEE

(laughs)

Preachin'! They ketch him preachin',  
he wouldn't be breathin' now. They  
foun' some Abolitionist writin's --  
booklets-like -- on him... had his  
pockets stuffed with 'em.

Hammond takes another look at the man -- and they move on. Brownlee leads them to a small circle of people surrounding WILSON, an elderly gentleman, and MEDE, a towering muscular black with a handsome, sculptured face and calm, confident eyes. He wears only a loin cloth. A plump, middle-aged GERMAN WOMAN is brazenly feeling him all over.

HAMMOND

(awed)

A Mandingo! Pure-bred!

WILSON

Playful as a kitten, strong as a  
bull elephant.

BROWNLEE

(pleased by Hammond's  
reaction)

Like I tol' you.

GERMAN WOMAN

What you call him?

WILSON

Mede... fer Ganymede.

The woman reaches under the slave's loin cloth and feels what's underneath.

HAMMOND

(shocked)

Ma'am!

GERMAN WOMAN

I ain't buying a pig in a poke.

CHARLES

(disgusted)

She carry on like a man.

(CONTINUED)

BROWNLEE

She buys him... tonight he finds out she's no man.

HAMMOND

(aghast)

A white lady pleasure with a nigger?! No, you wrong!

BROWNLEE

She's a German widder... and German ladies kin never pleasure enough.

The woman completes her examination of Mede.

GERMAN WOMAN

How much?

WILSON

Three thousand five hundred.

She reaches into her bodice and pulls out a roll of banknotes tied with string.

GERMAN WOMAN

(whimpering)

I ain't got no more than three thousand.

WILSON

We kin come to terms.

Hammond steps forward.

HAMMOND

I'll pay the price you askin'.

GERMAN WOMAN

(glaring at Hammond)

You ain't no gentleman, trying to take a nigger offn a poor widow.

HAMMOND

Fer the use you cravin' to make of him, ma'am... I ain't a-lettin' you git him.

Wrathfully the German Woman swings around, lifts her skirt, rummages in the folds of material, turns back to face them with another wad of banknotes in her hand.

GERMAN WOMAN

Four thousand!

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED - (3):

26

HAMMOND

I'll pay more... five hundred more.  
No white lady goin' to pester with  
a nigger, not iffn I kin stop it.

The woman glares at him with pure hatred, then stalks away furiously. Charles, Brownlee and several people in the crowd laugh, amused.

WILSON

(sorrowful)

You got a good boy. Trustworthy,  
obedient, whip-smart. I hate to  
sell him.

He puts his hand on Mede's shoulder, looks at him fondly. Mede seems to share the old man's feelings.

HAMMOND

I'll come fetch him in two, three  
days.

Mede looks furtively at Hammond -- a wary, scrutinizing glance -- but looks away when Hammond turns to gaze at him happily.

HAMMOND

I got me a fightin' nigger... and  
the Mandingo Papa dream about all  
his life!

He claps Brownlee on the back exuberantly.

26A EXT. CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

26A

The surrey with Charles and Hammond moves through a colonnade of soaring oak trees leading to a beautifully-kept, spacious mansion.

27 INT. PARLOR - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

27

The room is painfully elegant -- American copies of ornate Empire furniture, imitation Aubusson carpet, a great square piano, yellow damask curtains. Hammond sits staring at BIANCHE, who sneaks glances at him, affecting a shyness not natural to her. MAJOR WOODFORD and his wife BEATRIX watch the two of them with eager smiles -- and the avidity of matchmakers. Charles paces about the room, agitated and hostile. A black woman is serving them tea.

(CONTINUED)

Blanche, seventeen, pretentiously dressed, is pretty and buxom, with a certain petulance in her face -- a willful girl who knows what she wants and how to get it. Woodford is a bustling man in his fifties whose surface geniality can't quite conceal his inner anxiety. Beatrix is a severe, proper middle-aged woman, very concerned with appearances -- but given to occasional fluttery coyness. Partially deaf, she uses an ear trumpet.

BEATRIX

Mayhap Cousin Hammond... craves to carry Blanche to church meetin'.

Flustered, Hammond starts to answer but Charles cuts him off.

CHARLES

(mock solicitude)

No... not that cup fer Cousin Hammond! It be cracked!

He takes the cup from Hammond, displays it.

BEATRIX

(shocked)

Charles!

CHARLES

(to serving woman)

Give him that one. The only cup in Crowfoot that's whole.

BEATRIX

(smoothing it over)

Charles likes to rile folks with lies. Jest look at our furniture.

DICK, Blanche's older brother, mid-twenties, with a wild, frenzied air, enters. His pants are soaked to the knees.

DICK

I ducked 'em, ducked 'em good!  
It was easy, Pa. I kin do it!

WOODFORD

Dick, this your Cousin Hammond from Falconhurst.

(to Hammond)

Dick's been practicin' baptizin'... and preachin'... on the niggers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED - (2):

27

WOODFORD (cont'd)  
Don't mean nothin' to 'em... but  
Dick's a-learnin'...

CHARLES  
Keeps him from gamblin'... fer an  
hour or two.

Dick looks hostilely at Charles. Major Woodford and  
Beatrice pretend not to hear.

WOODFORD  
Beatrice, my dear, ain't Cousin  
Hammond the image of Uncle Theophilus.

BEATRICE  
Uncle Theophilus wasn't that handsome.  
An' Uncle Theophilus never look at  
Blanche like that. Blanche, you think  
Cousin Hammond is handsome?

Blanche, managing to blush, nods shyly.

CHARLES  
(infuriated)  
It don't matter iffn' Blanche think  
he's han'some. Whut matters is  
Cousin Hammond thinkin' Blanche is  
pretty.  
(to his father)  
You don't git the money ifn she  
ain't to his taste an' he don't  
wed her!  
(to Hammond)  
I heared your Pa!

Everyone is stunned. Blanche bursts into tears, sobbing  
with humiliation. Woodford and Beatrice go to comfort  
her. Hammond is terribly embarrassed, doesn't know what  
to do. Then he sees Charles walk out of the room and  
follows him.

28 INT. HALL - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

28

Hammond catches up with Charles.

HAMMOND  
You a good-fer-nothin', Cousin  
Charles.

CHARLES  
You crave to wed Blanche, you  
teched! Blanche is pizen... pizen!

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

HAMMOND

You watch that bad tongue of yourn...

He leaps toward Charles, fist raised, but the youth darts away from him and runs off.

29 INT. BIANCHE'S ROOM - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

Blanche dabs at her face with a wet towel, which she dips delicately in a basin of water on a vanity. Charles enters. She turns, looks at him coldly.

CHARLES

You ain't a-weddin' that Hammond.

BIANCHE

(quiet determination)

I'll be a-weddin' him.

Charles sulks. She decides to rub it in, punishing him.

BIANCHE

He's a fine ketch, good-lookin' and rich. And romantic, been to New Orleans, come from fur away.

CHARLES

I'll tell him. I'll tell him... whut we done.

BIANCHE

He wouldn't believe you. And Papa would throw you out.

(then fiercely)

Charles, I'm gittin' out of this house an' this family!

Charles looks at her malignly, wild with jealous anger and frustrated possessiveness. Blanche tosses her head and sails out of the room.

29A INT. STAIRWAY - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

Blanche walks haughtily down the stairs, stops, composes herself, lets the anger drain away and sets her face in dreamy serenity, then continues to the foot of stairs.

29B INT. HALL - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

She walks to the door, peeks out, sees Hammond on the veranda, withdraws, pats her hair, smiles shyly, then goes outside.



Blanche floats onto the veranda, pretending not to see Hammond, moves toward the veranda steps.

HAMMOND

Cousin Blanche!

She turns, feigning surprise and shame, starts to run off. Hammond pursues her, catches her by the arm, then drops his hand abashed.

HAMMOND

Cousin Blanche...

BLANCHE

(an accusation,  
but meekly)

You come to buy me.

HAMMOND

Don't put it like that, Cousin  
Blanche.

Suddenly she draws herself erect, the proud martyr -- and subtle flirt.

BLANCHE

Take a good look at me... like I  
was a wench. Am I to your taste?  
You crave I undress?

HAMMOND

(squirring)

Cousin Blanche... I'm terrible sorry.

She gazes at him with a gentle skepticism, then smiles demurely.

BLANCHE

I do believe you are.

HAMMOND

(brightening)

Kin I carry you to church, Cousin  
Blanche?

She nods happily, places her hand on Hammond's arm. They walk down the veranda steps toward a surrey waiting in the garden.

BLANCHE

A young gentleman carries a girl  
to church, everyone reckons they  
goin' to git married.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

Mayhap we is.

BLANCHE

Is whut?

HAMMOND

Mayhap we is goin' to git married.  
How you like to?

BLANCHE

You got a nice plantation? Big  
house?

HAMMOND

House ain't fine, like Crowfoot.  
Good enough fer jest Papa an' me.  
But I kin build a house. Jest been  
awaitin' until I marries to build  
a house -- a fine house.

BLANCHE

I ain't thought about gittin'  
married... much.

HAMMOND

My Papa says I got to marry and  
sire me a son.

BLANCHE

Is you-all proposin'?

HAMMOND

Reckon so... don't know how else  
to do it.

Blanche closes her eyes dreamily.

BLANCHE

Don't kiss me yet.

(then)

Unlessen it jest a cousin kiss.

Hammond takes her in his arms, kisses her awkwardly.  
But her lips fasten on his passionately. Then she  
breaks away for a moment.

BLANCHE

Charles say anythin' to you?  
'Bout me?

HAMMOND

He said you is pizen. Why he say  
that?

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED - (2):

30

BLANCHE

He don't want me a-leavin' Crowfoot.  
Charles a spiled, lonely person.

She casts a quick, searching glance at Hammond. Then, satisfied that Hammond is no longer curious, she kisses him again.

31 INT. PARLOR - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

31

Major Woodford and Beatrix stand at the window watching Hammond and their daughter kiss. Woodford takes Beatrix's wrist, raises her ear trumpet to her ear.

(CONTINUED)

WOODFORD

Don't take a man long to make up  
his mind fer a purty piece like  
that Blanche.

He walks to the door, calls out.

WOODFORD

Dick! Dick! Go fetch Pastor  
Jones soon as church done. We  
got a weddin'!

BEATRIX

But Cousin Hammond... he jest come  
today.

WOODFORD

When you has true love, the  
sooner the better.

BEATRIX

I jest hope she'll be a good  
wife and bring him right to Jesus.

Dick enters.

DICK

Jones been stayin' with Mista  
Maddox, gittin' him ready to  
meet his Maker. After church,  
he'll go right back, won't leave  
a dyin' man to come here.

WOODFORD

Goddam!

BEATRIX

We kin wait 'til tomorrer.

WOODFORD

That Maddox so onery, he'll stay  
alive a week.

X →

WOODFORD

Bad luck puttin' off a weddin'  
after it set. Got to be today  
or not ever.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED - (2):

31

He paces, distraught, suddenly looks at Dick.

WOODFORD

Dick! Dick, you kin do it! You a preacher!

DICK

(shocked)

No... Papa!

WOODFORD

Yes, you kin... do it good as any.

DICK

I'm jest a-startin' out, Papa. I cain't wed no white folks -- never did.

WOODFORD

You kin do it... you a-goin' to do it... jest as soon as they come back.

31A INT. HALLWAY - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

31A

The Major, Charles, Dick and Hammond entering from the veranda, walk toward the parlor.

HAMMOND

Reckon it legal?

WOODFORD

Legal as Jones. Dick says the words an' I write in the Bible ... you married, married fast.

DICK

I don't know the lines.

They enter the parlor.

31B INT. PARLOR - CROWFOOT PLANTATION - DAY

31B

The four men come through the doorway.

WOODFORD

Don't matter. You jest start talkin'... rememberin'... you been to weddin's. All you do is jest...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3LB CONTINUED:

3LB

WOODFORD (cont'd)

... ast 'em an' tell 'em. No need  
to string it out.

Charles begins to laugh contemptuously. Woodford gives him a savage, threatening look -- and he stops. He stards sullenly but quietly through the rest of the scene. Blanche and Beatrix enter.

BLANCHE

(pouting)

I ain't a-gittin' married in this  
dress.

HAMMOND

In New Orleans, I'll buy you all  
the dresses you craves.

This seems to satisfy Blanche for a moment. Then she's pouting again.

BLANCHE

Hammond ain't got no weddin' ring  
yet!

WOODFORD

Your Mama a-goin' to borrow you  
her ring 'til Hammond git it.

He grabs Beatrix's hand, roughly pulls off her wedding ring, hands it to Hammond. Beatrix looks stunned. Then Woodford takes hold of Blanche and Hammond.

WOODFORD

You two stan' here together.

He takes Beatrix by the arm, moves her alongside Blanche, calls into her ear trumpet.

WOODFORD

You, Mama, stan' right here so  
you kin hear good.

He surveys the scene, looks pleased.

WOODFORD

Everybody ready?  
(turns to Dick)  
Start the marryin'.

DICK

(uncertainly)

I reckon we got to kneel down  
first off.

(CONTINUED)

31B CONTINUED - (2):

31B

Dick waits for everyone to kneel -- then kneels himself.

DICK

Dear God, we come together here before You to join together these white folks in wedlock, in holy matrimony.

He looks nervously at his father.

WOODFORD

You doin' good, son.

DICK

(reassured)

An' God, my sister Blanche here, she stubborn. O God, thou...

Blanche, outraged, starts to speak. Dick keeps going, refusing to be interrupted.

BLANCHE

Whut call you got...

DICK

... knowest she stubborn.

Dick forges on, ignoring the exchange.

WOODFORD

He ain't talkin' to you he's talkin' to God.

DICK

Take it out of her heart, God...

DICK

... take the stubborn streak she got right out'n her heart. Make her give in to her husband, God, an' do whut he say and obey his commands like she had ought to.

WOODFORD

You craves to git married, keep that mouth of yourn shut!

He nods to Dick to continue.

DICK

An' bless this service of marriage, O God, an' make it legal an' bindin' on 'em both. An' bless me and my preachin' an' Charlie here, mean as he is. An' bless all Hammond's niggers an' my Papa's niggers, O God...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DICK (cont'd)  
... increase 'em and multiply 'em  
an' make 'em obey they masters...

WOODFORD  
(impatient)  
Git on with it, son. You a-stringin'  
it out.

DICK  
(nodding)  
That all fer now, O God... cain't  
bethink of nothin' else. Jest do  
whut I'm askin', O God, in Jesus'  
name. Everybody say "amen".

ALL  
Amen.

DICK  
Reckon you kin stan' up now.  
They rise to their feet.

DICK  
Does you, Hammond, take this lady,  
name of Blanche to be your lawful  
wedded wife, fer better or fer  
worse mos' likely, in sickness an'  
health, to love an' proteck till  
death or distance do you part?

HAMMOND  
Yes, suh.

DICK  
An' you, Blanche, do you accep'  
this Hammond here to be your lawful  
wedded husban' fer better or fer  
worse, in sickness an' health, to  
love an' obey without no back-talk  
till death or distance goin' to  
part you?

BLANCHE  
I accep's him.

DICK  
Then... I goin' to announce you  
husban' an' wife an' may God have  
mercy on your souls. Amen.

(CONTINUED)



31B CONTINUED - (4):

31B

Dick shakes Hammond's hand. Beatrix bursts into tears. Woodford beams. Blanche closes her eyes, tilts her head up, waiting to be kissed.

DICK  
Ain't you goin' to kiss her?

WOODFORD  
Hammond plagued... everybody lookin' on. Everybody turn away.

They all turn their backs to Hammond and Blanche -- and Hammond finally kisses her.

DICK  
Lordie! I fergot the ring!

31C EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - DAY

31C

ESTABLISHING SHOT of street, carriage, balconies. Hammond and Blanche, on their surrey, are driving down the street. The surrey is loaded with packages and parcels, etc.

32 EXT. HOTEL - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

32

Hammond and Blanche, swamped beneath piles of packages, parcels, hat boxes, draw up gaily on their surrey at the hotel entrance.

33 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

33

The room is in great disarray with heaps of gowns, little hats and shoes scattered everywhere. Blanche, radiant, laughing, holds the frocks up against herself, one after another. Hammond watches her, his expression tender and loving.

BLANCHE  
... you reckon the red is purtier than the green... on the new Mizzuz Maxwell?

She runs to Hammond, flings her arms around his neck, looks at her new wedding ring.

BLANCHE  
I'm so happy, Hammond. An' my ring, I love it... it bigger'n Mama's.

He hugs her, kisses her.

BLANCHE  
You like kissin' me?

HAMMOND  
Yes.

BLANCHE  
I crave you to do it.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

She covers his face with kisses. Then she stops, looks at him intensely, lowers her eyes.

BLANCHE

Whut we do next?

She looks up at him expectantly.

HAMMOND

I don't rightly know. I mean... with a wench I'd know. But with a white lady...

(pauses)

I guess we got to take off some clothin'.

(pauses)

Not everythin', of course.

He starts to undress her.

34 EXT. BALCONY - HOTEL ROOM - DAY

34

Hammond comes out on the balcony, putting on his jacket. Then fully dressed, he gazes blankly out over the roofs of the city in the dawn light. He looks stricken, haggard.

BLANCHE (O.S.)

Whut fer you git up?

He turns, enters the room.

35 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

35

Blanche lies in bed, apprehensively watches Hammond enter. He stares at her savagely.

HAMMOND

I cain't sleep, seem like, when I thinkin'.

BLANCHE

Whut you thinkin'?

HAMMOND

I'm thinkin'... I'm a-wonderin'... whut man you had afore me.

BLANCHE

Whure you git that zany notion, Hammond?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED - (A):

35

She rises from bed, goes to him, touches his face. He recoils.

HAMMOND

You a-thinkin' I don't know a virgin when I sleeps with one an' pleasures?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

BLANCHE

I was too a virgin.

HAMMOND

Once. Eut not las' night.

BLANCHE

Hammond Maxwell, how kin you think sich a thing. There weren't nobody. I was pure... till you.

HAMMOND

Might jest as well tell me who it is. I'll kill the son-a-bitch. Who pleased you afore me?

Blanche breaks down, weeping.

BLANCHE

You 'cusing me of somethin' I never done. I never done it, never...

Hammond coldly watches her cry.

HAMMOND

You disgusts me.

He walks out, slamming the door. Blanche throws herself on the bed, sobbing.

35C EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - NIGHT

35C

A handsome, commodious town house, its facade ornate with wrought iron decoration, balconies, French windows. Every window blazes with light -- from the open ones, the SOUND of voices, laughter and music streams into the night air. Fashionably dressed men, singly and in groups of two or three are entering and leaving the house. A carriage arrives as another leaves -- and Brownlee and Hammond get out, enter the house.

36 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - NIGHT

36

A spacious salon of gilded elegance. Beautiful girls circulate, laughing and joking with the customers of the bordello. A four girl orchestra -- piano, cello, violin, flute -- PLAYS classical music. In one corner, a black servant in a red, brocaded jacket prepares frappes. Every now and then a couple leaves the salon for an upstairs room.

(CONTINUED)

Hammond, dazzled and agape in his flamboyant setting, sits next to Brownlee on a divan. MADAME CAROLINE, the madam of the Academy, pours champagne into their goblets. She is a blonde French woman with an effusive, calculated charm.

MADAME CAROLINE

(to Hammond)

Your father's been unfaithful to me.  
He was one of my best customers...  
till a couple years ago.

Brownlee slaps Hammond on the back heartily, almost causing him to spill his drink.

BROWNLEE

I tol' you... your pa was a hell-raiser!

MADAME CAROLINE

For Warren Maxwell's charming son,  
tonight is compliments of the house.

She pecks Hammond on the cheek and leaves.

BROWNLEE

You lucky divill! I never got it  
free. Never will, I s'puse.

He looks around at the women greedily.

BROWNLEE

Hell, I don't keer. All I been  
sleepin' with fer six months is  
one warty widder. I'm goin' to  
spen' my money an' buy me a purty,  
smooth young 'un.

A BLONDE GIRL, nineteen, white, overripe, comes to them, sits on the arm of the divan, runs her fingers across Hammond's face.

BLONDE

Honey, I been a-servin' an' a-  
pleasurin' ol' men all evenin'.  
But I been a-watchin' your baby  
face ever since you come in,  
plannin' how I goin' to git to  
you.

Hammond, still shaken by his experience with Blanche, is not interested.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

I ain't a-feelin' good, lady.

BLONDE

I kin fix that, honey, all over.

BROWNLEE

You do that all over stuff?

BLONDE

Fer somebody like him.

She kisses Hammond's ear.

HAMMOND

I reckon not, lady.

She's not to be put off, begins kissing Hammond on the neck while he squirms. To close the matter, he chooses an awkward excuse.

HAMMOND

I'm... I'm on my... honeymoon.

BLONDE

(laughs)

That's when a gennulman needs some good lovin' the most!

BROWNLEE

He got the prettiest young piece fer a bride, right back at the hotel... a-waitin' there, a-layin' there...

BLONDE

I kin show him things his bride don't dream they do it on Mars whure they got creatures with six arms and four mouths.

She looks at Hammond who shakes his head.

BROWNLEE

He ain't goin' with you. I'm goin' with you!

She gives Hammond a final look, sees he isn't about to change his mind. Pouting, she turns to Brownlee.

BLONDE

(resigned)

Well, come on.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED - (3):

36

She and Brownlee go off. Hammond stares after them, looking wretched.

37 EXT. COURTYARD - MUSIC ACADEMY - NIGHT

37

BABOUIN, a gigantic black -- the Academy's night watchman, in a gold-buttoned, scarlet jacket -- pads up and down. Through the lit, balconied windows, the festivities inside the Academy can be seen and HEARD. Babouin pauses to watch one sexual tableau -- a tangle of nude bodies. The bell on the street door RINGS but he ignores it. It RINGS again and Babouin moves reluctantly to the door, opens it. Mede stands there.

MEDE

Masta Hammon' Maxwell tol' me to come wait fer him here.

BABOUIN

Niggers ain't allowed inside.

MEDE

You a nigger...

BABOUIN

I Madame Caroline's slave.

MEDE

An' I Masta Hammon's slave. I ain't no slave of the biggest who' in New Orleans.

Exploding, Babouin leaps at Mede, punching and kicking. Mede crashes into the ground, then jumps to his feet, blind with rage. He lowers his head and charges Babouin like a battering ram. Babouin sidesteps in time and Mede, unable to check his rush, sprawls across the ground. Babouin grabs a chair and smashes it on Mede's head. Mede manages to catch hold of his adversary's leg and heave him over. They roll on the ground, struggling.

A girl's scream is HEARD and suddenly the balconies are full of spectators, excited by the battle. Madame Caroline appears on one of the balconies.

MADAME CAROLINE

(shouting)

STOP IT, BABOUIN! I'll have you whipped to death.

Her words fall on deaf ears. Babouin and Mede continue pounding and gouging each other.

(CONTINUED)

MADAME CAROLINE  
(looking frantically  
about)

Stop them... STOP THEM!

Hammond appears on a balcony, sees the combatants.

HAMMOND

Mede... MEDE! Stop... STOP, I TELL  
YOU!

On another balcony, the MARQUIS DeMARIGNY, an elegant dandy, watches the fight gleefully. His companion, LAZARE LeTOSCAN, claps his hands enthusiastically.

DeMARIGNY

No... NO! LET THEM FIGHT! A thousand dollars to the winner of the owner.

(looking toward  
Madame Caroline)

A thousand dollars to you, Madame Caroline, if your man wins.

The offer is irresistible. Madame Caroline subsides, sits down in a chair on the balcony. Other men on the balconies and in the courtyard begin to make their own bets.

VOICES

Five hundred on Babouin...  
The other one... four hundred...  
Five hundred on the blackest...  
He'll kill him... six hundred...

The savage fight continues. Babouin, lashing out ferociously, seems to have the advantage. Mede's blows sink into his opponent's flesh as if he were punching a feather mattress.

Hammond watches fascinated -- his fighting Mandingo in action. Finally, Mede sees his chance, lands a mighty blow in the solar plexus, follows up with a barrage of punches to face and body. Babouin sags to the ground, unconscious. Mede leaps, stands on Babouin's chest. The spectators roar.

DeMARIGNY

I proclaim Mede the victor.

He turns, bows to Madame Caroline.

DeMARIGNY

Cherie, you've given us the most stimulating spectacle in years.

(CONTINUED)



37 CONTINUED - (2):

37

She forces a smile. Hammond appears in the courtyard, runs up to Mede. Thrilled, exultant, he slaps Mede on the back, puts his arm around him.

HAMMOND

Good boy, Mede! That was right purty.

He looks at him, glowing with admiration.

HAMMOND

You hurtin'?

MEDE

(proud and happy)  
I feels jes' fine, Masta.

DeMarigny comes up to them.

DeMARIGNY

Whatever you paid for him, I'll double it.

HAMMOND

I paid four thousand, five hundred.

DeMARIGNY

I'll give you seven thousand.

Mede looks quizzically at Hammond -- will he sell him?

HAMMOND

No.

DeMARIGNY

Nine. Nire thousand.

HAMMOND

He's not fer sale.

Mede smiles with satisfaction, a private smile, elated by the value Hammond places on him. He looks at Hammond gratefully, respectfully. And Hammond senses this -- suddenly there is a bond between them, something far exceeding master and slave.

DeMARIGNY

Then he must fight my man, Topaz.

Hammond turns to Mede, as though ready to do the unorthodox thing of asking a slave's wish. Then he turns back to DeMarigny.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED - (3):

37

HAMMOND

All right.

DeMARIGNY

In two months, perhaps three.  
Here.

(supercilious)

I advise you -- train him well.

He goes. A black servant approaches with a tray of frappes. Hammond takes one, starts to sip it -- then offers it to the panting, exhausted Mede. Mede takes the drink with an expression of wonder at this remarkable treatment.

38 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

38

Hammond's surrey -- Blanche beside her husband in front and Mede in the back surrounded by boxes and baggage -- travels smartly along roads leading past the Wallace Plantation back to Falconhurst. The tension and rancor between Hammond and his wife are almost palpable. Every so often he glances at her hatefully. Finally, he breaks into silence.

HAMMOND

My Papa, we musn't tell him  
nothin' 'bout whut's happered  
between us.

He leans toward her, lowers his voice so Mede can't hear.

HAMMOND

He ain't never goin' to know...  
never... you wan't pure.

BLANCHE

Hammond, I swear it. You got to  
believe I was...

HAMMOND

Bust his heart. Bus' it right  
open -- thinkin' of Falconhurst  
goin' to the son of a...

He can't utter the terrible word that comes to mind. He falls silent for a few moments.

HAMMOND

We-all married. Ain't nothin'  
we kin do.

He whips the horses fiercely and the surrey spurts forward.

39 EXT. WALLACE PLANTATION - DAY

39

From the moving surrey, Hammond observes the black women working the fields. Suddenly alert, he looks intently for something or someone.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ellen watches the surrey pass, her eyes on Hammond, bright and happy -- but then clouding with sadness as she views Blanche at his side. For a moment Hammond's and Ellen's eyes meet, then she turns away trembling.

40 EXT. WALLACE PLANTATION HOUSE - DAY

40

Hammond reins in the horses as the surrey reaches the house Blanche looks at him questioningly -- and he seems uneasy.

BLANCHE

Whut fer we stoppin' here?

HAMMOND

Hosses be tired. Mede... git them some water.

Mede does as Hammond orders while Hammond walks to the entrance of the house. Wallace appears at the door and the two men go inside.

41 EXT. FIELD - WALLACE PLANTATION - DAY

41

Hammond and Wallace walk toward the women working in the field, Ellen among them.

WALLACE

Mista Brownlee come by -- got a nigger of yourn he's tryin' to sell me. Cicero.

HAMMOND

He's a troublemaker.

(CONTINUED)

WALLACE

Don't mind that kind. I like to tame 'em. Too many nigger risin's a-happenin'. Virginia, the Carolinas, 'specially Georgia. Folks still a-talkin' about that Nat Turrer. An' them Abolitionists sneakin' down here, totin' that Liberator newspaper of Garrison's ... puttin' ideas in they heads.

Within earshot of the women now, Wallace calls out.

WALLACE

Ellen! Ellen! Yes, I'm talkin' to you. Come here.

She runs toward the men, fearful but expectant. Hammond watches her almost shyly.

WALLACE

Masta Hammond craves to buy you. You want to go with him?

Ellen is speechless with happiness. She stares at Hammond, then at Wallace and back to Hammond. She nods.

WALLACE

(grinning)  
Git your bundle.

She runs off toward the slave cabins.

WALLACE

I'm happy you got her. She's a fancy girl... too pretty. She'd a-gone to some sportin' gentleman who'd use her awhile then sell her again.

They walk toward the house.

Hammond climbs into the driver's seat of the surrey, feigning nonchalance. Ellen comes racing toward the surrey, clutching her bundle of rags and tatters, almost trips in her haste. Reaching the surrey, she stands and waits meekly. Blanche watches with canny eyes.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

HAMMOND

Git in the back. Mede, shift over  
... an' don't touch her!

Ellen obeys in a flash. The surrey surges forward -- Hammond flicking the horses with the whip, a light-heartedness in his gestures. Blanche by now has sensed something.

BLANCHE

Who that wench?

HAMMOND

A slave I bought... some time back.

BLANCHE

She fer the Mandingo?

HAMMOND

She ain't.

Blanche drops the subject. But as the surrey speeds along the country lane, she turns to stare at Ellen curled up among the piles of baggage. Blanche's eyes pierce the girl like knives and Ellen shrinks back, overcome by uneasiness.

43 EXT. FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

43

The surrey covers the last stretch of ground leading to the house.

HAMMOND

(proudly)

Falconhurst.

BLANCHE

(disappointed)

This it?

HAMMOND

This it!

He looks at her sharply, annoyed.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The surrey draws up in front of the veranda. Lucrezia Borgia waddles over to it. Meg, Alph, Lucy and Agamemnon come running up.

(CONTINUED)

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Oh, Masta... Masta Hammon... an'  
this is the new Miz... ain't she  
purty!

She embraces Hammond as he gets down fro the surrey.  
Then she throws her arms around Blanche, who detaches  
herself as soon as she can.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Ever sence your Mama die, I been  
wantin' 'nother purty white  
mist'ess... an' now I got me one!

Maxwell appears on the threshold, tearful with emotion  
at Hammond's return with a bride.

MAXWELL

(tremulous)

Ham... Ham... !

Hammond runs to him, embraces him warmly, then points to  
Blanche who has followed him to the door.

HAMMOND

This Cousin Blanche. Your daughter  
now, Papa. Married an' everythin'.

Maxwell draws her close and kisses her forehead.

MAXWELL

Welcome home to Falconhurst, my dear.

He doesn't see her frown at the word "home".

MAXWELL

Tain't fine-haired like Crowfoot,  
but it right comfortin'. Come in,  
come in...

But as he turns to lead them inside the house, he spies  
Mede unloading packages from the surrey.

MAXWELL

A Mandingo! You brung home a  
Mandingo... ! A bride and a Mandingo!

He starts out toward Mede. Hammond stops him with a hand  
on his shoulder.

HAMMOND

Later, Papa. You see him later.

They go in the house.

44 INT. SITTING ROOM - FALCONHURST - DAY

44

Blanche, entering, gazes around with bitter disappointment at the bleak, grey room with its sparse, shabby furnishings.

BLANCHE

(to Hammond)

The new house... whure you goin' to make it?

HAMMOND

Over to the east... iff'n we build it.

MAXWELL

We'll build it... we'll build it. A house fine enough fer a fine lady.

Meg carries a tray of steaming hot toddies into the room. Hammond and Maxwell take their drinks.

BLANCHE

(outraged)

Corn? You drink corn in this house?

MAXWELL

(shame-faced)

Medicine. Jest medicine fer my rheumatiz.

BLANCHE

(loftily)

I'm temp'ance.

(looks at Hammond drinking)

You got rheumatiz, too?

MAXWELL

Hammond be tired from the journey.

Blanche watches the two men drinking, calculating.

BLANCHE

My head does ache me awful, a-jouncin' in that surrey.

MAXWELL

(eagerly)

A toddy sovereign fer a headache.

He holds out a toddy from the tray. Blanche looks at it with extravagant disdain.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

It's vile, it's a sin... but it's  
sovereign fer a headache.

Blanche daintily accepts the glass, sniffs it.

BLANCHE

It smells right awful.

MAXWELL

It medicine... drink it down.

Blanche takes a tiny sip, then another. She notices  
Hammond staring at her with surprise and displeasure.

BLANCHE

It tastes awful, too... but it do  
ease my head...

Lucrezia Borgia enters, pushing TENSE into the room.  
Tense is a pretty, light-skinned girl in a sack-like  
frock.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Go on in there. Nobody not goin'  
to do nothin' to you. This yo'  
new mist'ess. Curtsy to her, nice-  
like.

Tense curtsies, frightened, her eyes on Hammond.

HAMMOND

(to Blanche)

She all yourn. How you like her?

BLANCHE

(incensed)

She's your wench, that plain.

HAMMOND

Don't talk so... front of Papa.

BLANCHE

The way she roll her eyes towards  
you!

HAMMOND

I ain't never touched her.

BLANCHE

(scoffing)

A purty one like that... an' you  
ain't never touched her!

(CONTINUED)



MAXWELL

Hammond... Blanche... !

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Miz Blanche, Tense pure yet,  
You kin feel fer yer own self.

Blanche gasps, turns away haughtily.

HAMMOND

You doesn't like this one... go  
through the cabins, take your  
pick.

BLANCHE

(coldly)

All right, this one good as any.  
I reckon you had 'em all.

HAMMOND

(pointedly)

You didn't s'pose that... I... was  
no virgin.

Blanche flushes, regretting she embarked on the subject.  
Maxwell tries to allay the tension in the room, goes to  
Blanche.

MAXWELL

You all petered out, fretful...  
a-marryin' and a-ridin'. Some  
rest... do you good.

(to Tense)

Tense, you show her the way.

Blanche follows Tense out of the room. Maxwell goes  
to Hammond.

MAXWELL

Son, I'm content... right content.  
She's a beautiful lady. Now,  
whure that Mandingo?

Hammond smiles.

Mede and Ellen stand by the surrey. Hammond and Maxwell  
come out of the house. Lucrezia Borgia follows them,  
waits on the veranda.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL  
 (incredulous)  
 Lord be praised!  
 (then doubtful)  
 You sure he pure? Don't want no  
 half.

HAMMOND  
 I got his papers.

Maxwell shuffles over to Mede, sees the bruises and cuts  
 on his body.

MAXWELL  
 What happen to him?

HAMMOND  
 He fought... and won. Goin' to  
 fight again soon after I train him.

MAXWELL  
 (worried)  
 He look ruint. His testicles...  
 they ain't been teared off?

HAMMOND  
 No... he's fine. Hung so big, he  
 tear the wenches.

Maxwell nods, pleased.

MAXWELL  
 A little bacon rind fix that.  
 (turns to Lucrezia Borgia)  
 Lucrezia Borgia, sen' fer Big Pearl.  
 (to Hammond)  
 Might as well put 'em together right  
 away.

HAMMOND  
 (overlapping, anxiously)  
 No... Papa. Mede's still tired out  
 ... hurtin'.

MEDE  
 I ain't tired, Masta. I'm ready.

MAXWELL  
 He says you tired, you tired.  
 Don't dispute.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

Lucrezia Borgia, take him in the kitchen and gill him up right good ... all he kin eat. Make him swaller half a dozen raw eggs... eight or ten ... stir 'em up an' make him drink 'em down after he done et hisself full.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

I pour 'em eggs down or I choke him silly.

Mede follows Lucrezia Borgia to the kitchen building. Hammond takes Maxwell by the arm, draws him aside, out of Ellen's hearing.

HAMMOND

Papa, this worryin'.

He takes out a folded document, gives it to Maxwell who examines it.

MAXWELL

I see whut botherin' you.

HAMMOND

(nodding)

Papers say Mede the brother of Big Pearl... Lucy his Ma.

MAXWELL

They don't know. Mede was jest a sucker when he was sold.

HAMMOND

Papa... that be incest.

MAXWELL

(sternly)

Works sovereign with animals, work fine with niggers.

HAMMOND

Whut you do, the sucker turn out a monster?

MAXWELL

Snuff it out. Son, you got to git certain ideas outn your head.

He glances over at Ellen approvingly.

MAXWELL

How much you pay fer her?

HAMMOND

Fifteen hundred.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED - (3):

MAXWELL

(surprised)

Fifteen hundred for a wench?!

HAMMOND

(defensive)

I fancied her an' I bought her.  
She's goin' to be my bed wench.

Maxwell looks searchingly at Hammond, sensing Hammond's regard for Ellen.

MAXWELL

Blanche ain't a-goin' to like that.

HAMMOND

You say your own self, a white lady  
don't relish much pesterin'...

MAXWELL

A white lady don't like her husband  
gittin' tender 'bout a wench,  
neither.

Hammond reddens, flustered and upset by his father's acuteness.

INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tense is helping Blanche undress as Hammond enters.

BLANCHE

Whure she sleep?

HAMMOND

Foot of the bed. Whurever you like.

BLANCHE

No. Not right in the room.

HAMMOND

We isn't goin' to do nothin'  
this evenin'.

He picks up two satchels from the mound of baggage and packages.

BLANCHE

Ain't you sleepin' here?

Hammond doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCHE

You content your wife cryin' all night?

She sees Hammond isn't about to change his mind.

BLANCHE

(a calculating smile)

Whut your Papa think?

HAMMOND

He and Mama had separate rooms -- won't make him think we ain't happy together.

BLANCHE

(a threat)

I'll tell him.

Hammond gazes at her venomously. Then he motions to Tense.

HAMMOND

Tense, you step outside a secon'.

He waits for Tense to leave.

HAMMOND

(sarcastic)

Whut you tell him... that you had someone afore me?

Stung, Blanche subsides into silence.

HAMMOND

When you decides to say who pleased you afore me... I might treat you better. I jest might...

He takes his bags and starts to go.

BLANCHE

(murderously)

You goin' to that wench, Ellen?

Hammond leaves without answering. Tense re-enters and Blanche takes her anger out on the girl.

BLANCHE

Git out! Git out! You ain't stayin' in this room with me!

Tense runs out terrified.

47 INT. KITCHEN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - NIGHT

47

Mede is eating and drinking. Lucrezia Borgia, Meg and Alph, Agamemnon, and Dite are gathered around him, curious about the newcomer. Ellen is there, too, a newcomer, but receiving no attention.

MEDE

Man ready to give Masta Hammon'  
nine thousan' dollars fer me...  
Masta Hammon' say no.

AGAMEMNON

You done lose... he trade you fer  
a cripple dog.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Mem, you a-startin' agin!

AGAMEMNON

A white man like to think, got to  
think... a nigger an animal. More  
you ack like an animal, more he  
say you worth.

MEDE

(getting angry)

You talkin' like a dumb animal,  
right now!

Mede, furious, starts rising from his chair. Lucrezia Borgia puts a restraining hand on his shoulder.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Don' you let him a-rile you. Mem  
ain't got no sense to keep his  
thoughts to hisself.

MEG

Mem think the white man a divil  
monster.

AGAMEMNON

(furious)

You don'?

(CONTINUED)

LUCREZIA BORGIA

(laughs)

Ain't never see you tell a white man to his white face he a devil monster... fer all yer mouthin'.

MEDE

I alluz git good treatin' from my white mastas.

DIITE

(proud)

I git good treatin', too!

AGAMEMNON

(scornful)

Cuz you young, purty an' good at pleasurin'.

(to Mede)

An' cuz you bigger and blacker an' all Mandingo. But you still a slave... doin' they work, a-takin' they orders, a-carryin' they shit ... an' goin' to an early grave the white man done dig fer you when you was born.

(pauses)

That thinkin' never come into yo' haid?

MEDE

(slowly)

It come... I don't let it stay there.

Hammond and Maxwell enter.

HAMMOND

Wantin' anythin', Mede?

MEDE

I got all I needs, Masta.

MAXWELL

(to Lucrezia Borgia)

Take him to sleep with Big Pearl.

HAMMOND

(protesting)

Papa...

MAXWELL

You hush. Everythin' work out fine. Got to breed him to see.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED - (2):

47

Hammond capitulates, but still shows concern.

HAMMOND

(to Lucrezia Borgia)

You tell Lucy to put packs on his face, git rid of them bruises.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Somebody better tell Lucy to let Big Pearl have him first.

MAXWELL

I'll tell her right proper.  
Good night, son.

Hammond kisses his father and Maxwell leaves with Mede and Lucrezia Borgia. Dite comes up to Hammond.

HAMMOND

You stay here, Dit. I got me a new wench.

Dite says nothing, but her stunned face reveals her pain.

HAMMOND

But you go on bein' a house servant. With a sucker in you, I don't want you tirin' yourself.

DITE

Thankee, Masta Hammon', suh.

HAMMOND

Ellen... you come with me.

Ellen, flushed with shame, follows Hammond out of the room. Dite watches her go, eyes slitted. Agamemnon studies Dite with perverse amusement. Dite sees him looking at her -- and the mocking look in his eyes triggers her raging jealousy. She sweeps her arm violently across the table, deliberately sending several plates crashing to the floor.

AGAMEMNON

Dite... you ain't s'pose to be jealous. An animal ain't got no feelin's. Cuz you got Masta Hammon's sucker in yo' belly, you reckon he keer?

(CONTINUED)



47 CONTINUED - (3):

47

Dite covers her face with her hands, begins to cry.

48 INT. HAMMOND'S ROOM - FALCONHURST - NIGHT

48

Candlelight throws flickering shadows against the wall. Hammond lies naked in bed, watching Meg wash Ellen who sits in a round tub of steaming water. Ellen steps from the tub and Meg, pouting with resentment, begins to towel her dry.

HAMMOND

After you dry her, you git in,  
too... water's still hot.

MEG

I don' crave to wash in her  
water, Masta, suh... I want yourn.

The boy's impudent refusal annoys Hammond. He grabs him and pitches him in the tub, clothes and all.

HAMMOND

When I says wash, you wash!

Meg scrambles out of the tub, dripping with water, runs from the room. Hammond looks after him with a gentle smile, then walks to Ellen, embraces her tenderly.

HAMMOND

This whure we goin' to sleep,  
every night.

ELLEN

You jes' wed, Masta...

HAMMOND

Don't think 'bout her...

He caresses Ellen, tracing her features with his fingertips.

HAMMOND

I never thought it afore... a  
black wench is more beautiful  
than a white lady... more  
beautiful...

He kisses her.

49 ELIMINATED

49

50 ELIMINATED

50

51 EXT. VERANDA - FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

51

Hammond and Maxwell are seated. Maxwell being shaved by Agamemnon. Alph is curled about Maxwell's feet. Meg is serving hot toddies. Blanche enters.

MAXWELL

Lucrezia fixin' your breakfast?

BLANCHE

Yes. She is.

MAXWELL

(warmly)

Sit here by your Pa, lass. How was your first night at Falconhurst?

BLANCHE

Ain't slep' a wink.

MAXWELL

(flustered but pleased)

Foolish question, that were. Ham, after lunch you take her ridin' to see the plantation.

(looks out at the sky)

Ain't goin' to rain -- jest threatenin'.

AGAMEMNON

It could still, Masta.

Agamemnon realizes at once he's blundered -- contradicted his master. All present stare at him as though he's committed a major crime.

MAXWELL

Whut you say?

AGAMEMNON

(a creak)

I said it couldn't still rain, Masta. Not today. Not ever.

Hammond and Maxwell laugh.

BLANCHE

You jest laughs. You let him git away like that! You treat your niggers too good.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

HAMMOND

We treat 'em as they ought to be  
treated.

BLANCHE

You talk like them Abolitionists  
up North.

( CONTINUED )

51 CONTINUED:

HAMMOND

An' you talk like a know-all.

He stalks away, walks to his horse, mounts and canters off.

MAXWELL

Hammond! Hammond!

(turns to Blanche)

It too soon to be a-pickin' quarrels.

(then soothing)

Tomorrer, he'll take you roun' the farm.

BIANCHE

No. No, he won't.

Maxwell looks surprised at her response.

BIANCHE

Hammond'll always have somethin' more important to do than bother 'bout me.

Maxwell's eyes show concern. Then he looks upward as heavy raindrops begin falling on the roof of the veranda. Suddenly, it's a deluge. Maxwell looks peevish, turns to Agamemnon.

MAXWELL

Mem, I'm a-likin' you less every day.

Agamemnon tries to suppress a smile.

52 EXT. FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

52

A bright, sunny day. Hammond gallops on his horse -- with Mede running swiftly in his wake, light-footed and graceful. Hammond whips his horse, increases speed. He shouts back to Mede.

HAMMOND

Come on, Mede... you kin do better'n that.

He reins in the horse near the house -- and throws Mede a piece of cloth as he comes running up, drenched with sweat.

HAMMOND

Don't want you to git the chills afore the fight.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

Mede dries himself while Hammond watches him with admiration. He takes the cloth and dries off Mede's back.

HAMMOND

You a lucky buck... able to run like that.

53 BIANCE AT WINDOW

53

of the house watches Hammond minister to his slave -- her face filled with resentment -- and then contempt.

54 EXT. ANOTHER AREA - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

54

Hammond, on horseback, watches Mede, bare to the waist, hack violently with an axe at the trunk of a huge tree. The trunk splits and the tree crashes to the ground. Hammond smiles.

55 EXT. COTTON FIELDS - FALCONHURST - DAY

55

Mede drags a heavy plow he is yoked to by heavy leather thongs. Hammond walks alongside. They pass several slaves picking cotton -- who see Mede and begin to snicker derisively.

HAMMOND

Go on laughin'... an' I'll have you yoked to a plow till you grow horns like an ox.

56 EXT. FALCONHURST PLANTATION - NIGHT

56

Mede and VULCAN, a massive mulatto, struggle fiercely, rolling over and over on muddy ground, wrestling and punching. Hammond watches with Agamemnon. Finally Hammond gestures to Agamemnon who then flings a bucket of water on the contestants, signalling the fight is over. They rise, separate.

HAMMOND

Right purty, Mede. You a-comin' along fine.

(turns to Agamemnon)

Tell Lucy and Lucrezia Borgia to rub him down good.

AGAMEMNON

Yas, suh, Masta Hammon'.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

Hammond leaves. Agamemnon turns to look at Mede, who is scraping mud away from his arms and torso.

AGAMEMNON

You doin' good, Mede. Gittin' to be a better and better white man's fightin' animal. Mayhap he teach you to growl, grunt an' bark...

Mede, angry, flicks some mud at Agamemnon.

AGAMEMNON

When you goin' to learn the color of yo' skin, Mede?

MEDE

Jes' as soon's you stops puttin' on yo' smilin' face with Masta Hammon'.

He walks away.

57 INT. SITTING ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

57

Hammond enters the room, looking tired but happy. Then he sees Blanche, glass in hand, seated beside his father. She tries to put the glass down before Hammond sees it.

HAMMOND

You temp'ance like an old drunk.

MAXWELL

(excusing her)

Blanche ain't settled down here yet. An' you ain't helpin', ignorin' her.

BLANCHE

(saucily)

Thankee, Papa Warren.

She picks up her drink defiantly and sips it.

MAXWELL

How your fightin' buck do?

HAMMOND

Near broke that Vulcan's neck.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

BLANCHE

You an' your niggers. Don't you  
ever talk about nothin' else. My  
Pa...

HAMMOND

(cutting her off)

Your Pa bust... I

Blanche, deflated, takes a hasty swallow, spills some on  
her dress. Mortified, she hurries from the room.

MAXWELL

Go after her, Ham. She your wife.

Hammond stands unmoving.

MAXWELL

(harshly)

Go!

Hammond reluctantly leaves.

58

INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

58

Blanche tears off her clothes, gets in bed under the  
sheet. Hammond enters, looks at her, scowls.

BLANCHE

My head goin' roun' an' roun'.

Hammond's gaze is chilly, unfeeling.

HAMMOND

You jest drunk.

BLANCHE

I took that toddy fer courage...  
to tell you whut I'm a-thinkin'  
... a-feelin'. Hammond... you  
ain't touched me... Hammond...  
don't you want to pleasure me... ?

She flings away the sheet, revealing herself naked. She  
grasps his wrist.

BLANCHE

Hammond... please... pleasure me.  
I need you, Hammond... I crave  
you.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

You sure a strange kind of white lady.

He pulls his hand away and walks out. Blanche grabs the glass from the table and drains the rest of the liquor.

INT. LUCY'S CABIN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

Mede lies on the bed while Lucy and Big Pearl rub his body with a foul-smelling ointment. Lucrezia Borgia watches critically. Hammond and Maxwell, holding the ointment bottle, supervise.

HAMMOND

Harder. Work it in... twist the joints. He won't come apart.

Lucrezia Borgia shoves the two women aside.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Stan' back... I show you how!

She kneels on the bed, then slides her arms under Mede and flips him over like a pancake. She begins kneading and pummeling him without mercy. Mede moans with pain.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Stay quiet, black boy!

She takes the bottle from Maxwell, pours a flood on Mede's back, gives the bottle back to Maxwell, continuing kneading, pounding Mede.

HAMMOND

It smell like skunk shit. Must be good stuff.

MAXWELL

(reading bottle label)

Doctor Mulbach's Serpent Oil... sovereign elixir to promote the puissance of the musculature and the flexation of the articulative processes. Used by the world's foremost acrobats and pugilists... and the Sultan of Turkey...

LUCREZIA BORGIA

(to Big Pearl)

Set on his back an' hol' him down. I goin' to stretch his limbs.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Big Pearl climbs on Mede's back. Lucrezia seizes one of his legs and bends it up and back. Mede grunts with agony.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Hollerin' won' git you nothin'.  
Jes' make me bend you higher up.

She gives his leg a sharp warning shove. Then she moans, clutches her belly.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

I thinks my sucker a-comin'.

She looks at Maxwell, a wide smile on her face.

EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

A huge copper cauldron of steaming water stands on the lawn. Lucy and Meg feed the fire beneath it with armfuls of logs. Hammond walks up with Mede who is removing his shirt. Maxwell joins them, sitting down in a chair Alph brings from the veranda, to watch the show.

HAMMOND

(to Mede)

In you git.

Mede removes his trousers, eyeing the steaming cauldron fearfully. Then he edges carefully, slowly into the brine.

MEDE

(groaning)

It hot, Masta...

Hammond plunges his hand into the cauldron, draws it back.

HAMMOND

(wincing)

The brine awful hot, Papa.

MAXWELL

Got to be -- to toughen his hide.

HAMMOND

(doubtful)

Reckon it could soften him instead.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

It's all right... jest so it ain't  
 bilin' or scaldin'. Them ol' Romans  
 always salted their fightin' slaves.

MEDE

I cain't stand it, Masta Hammon'  
 ... it hurt!

MAXWELL

You stay there. You got skin  
 like a sucker now. A champeen  
 buck'd rip you open.

Hammond watches uneasily, sharing Mede's pain, then  
 walks away.

INT. HAMMOND'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

Hammond lies on his bed while Ellen fans him with a  
 Palmetto branch.

HAMMOND

Time I was a little saplin',  
 Lucrezia Borgia used to fan me  
 to sleep.

ELLEN

(anxious, hesitant)  
 Lucrezia Borgia... she say I knocked.

Hammond looks at her, troubled -- an inner conflict stir-  
 ring.

ELLEN

She say I missin' my time of month.

HAMMOND

Whut she know?

ELLEN

She have twenty-five suckers...  
 ccuntin' the new one.

This registers on Hammond. He begins to explore Ellen's  
 breasts, gently prodding.

ELLEN

They itch-like an' ache a little.

HAMMOND

Mayhap she right.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

(begins to cry)

Now you won't be a-wantin' me...  
be givin' me to one of the fiel'  
han's... or sellin' me...

Hammond takes her in his arms.

HAMMOND

Ellen, honey. I ain't a-givin'  
you away ever. You... mine.

ELLEN

(marvelling)

You ain't mad... ?

HAMMOND

This how mad I be.

He kisses her. Ellen looks at him timidly, then speaks.

ELLEN

But you... you be a-goin' to sell  
our sucker.

HAMMOND

No... no... I ain't. Won't do  
that neither, Ellen.

ELLEN

(testing)

You goin' to sell Dite's sucker.

HAMMOND

That different. Our sucker...  
we keep him, raise him right here  
at Falconhurst.

Ellen smiles happily. Hammond looks pleased.

HAMMOND

That make you glad?

She nods, then her face grows solemn.

ELLEN

Hammon'... Hammon'... kin I ast  
you somethin'... ?

Hammond nods.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED - (2):

61

ELLEN

(nervously)

When our sucker growed up... could  
he... go free... you give him his  
freedom?

HAMMOND

(shocked)

You craves to be free!

Ellen is terrified, says nothing.

HAMMOND

(an accusation)

YOU CRAVES TO BE FREE?!

ELLEN

(faintly)

No.

HAMMOND

Then whut fer you want the sucker  
to be free?!

ELLEN

(picking her words  
carefully)

Fer... fer a buck... a boy chile  
... a lot o' misery don' happen to  
him... don' git whupped when the  
Masta want to whup you, don' git  
penned on a patch o' land like a  
pig, never kin go nowhure...  
cain't learn to read or write  
lessen he git beat or killed...

She pauses, intimidated by Hammond's stern, furious  
expression.

ELLEN

Hammon'... Hammon'... fergit 'bout it.

HAMMOND

I damn right goin' to fergit it!

Ellen bursts into tears. This is the first time she  
has ever asked Hammond for anything, she has just  
expressed her deepest, most inexpressible wish -- and  
he simply stamped on it. She cries wretchedly, making  
Hammond very uncomfortable.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED - (3):

61

HAMMOND

It mean that much to you... ?

(pauses)

Ellen... Ellen, all right... the  
sucker'll go free. I promise you  
... the sucker kin go free.

He takes her in his arms.

62 ELIMINATED

62

63 EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

63

A festival atmosphere. Slaves bustle about helping Big Pearl and Agamemnon load baggage into a carriage that stands in front of the veranda. Doc Redfield arrives on horseback, turns his horse over to a slave. Hammond appears, walks toward Redfield. Maxwell comes out of the house with Lucrezia Borgia, who helps him into the carriage.

MAXWELL

I'm trustin' Falconhurst to you  
while we gone. Don't be spendin'  
all your time with your sucker  
now.

The slaves suddenly break into applause as Mede arrives. He beams with all the attention and admiration.

REDFIELD

(to Hammond)

You got him trained real good?

HAMMOND

(uneasily)

Reckon he could use another  
two weeks.

MEDE

I fine, Masta. I whups any  
fighter you wants.

Doc Redfield climbs into the carriage. Hammond and Mede start to follow him when... Blanche appears, coming out of the house. She is a bit unsteady on her feet, prettily dressed, carries a parasol and a hat box. Behind her, Tense carries two travelling bags. Hammond, seeing Blanche, looks unpleasantly surprised. A hush falls over the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCHE

(to Tense)

Put them bags in the carriage.

She over-enunciates to conceal the drunken slur in her speech.

HAMMOND

Blanche... a nigger fight ain't  
no place fer a white lady.

BLANCHE

I'll be goin' to the dressmaker.  
You-all kin watch the nigger fight.

MAXWELL

You ain't well, lass. It's a  
long journey.

BLANCHE

I feel fine.

HAMMOND

Cain't you see... there ain't no  
room in the carriage.

(deadly)

You ain't goin', Blanche.

With a defiant toss of her head, Blanche marches in front of the horses, dumps herself on the ground, sitting in the path of the carriage.

BLANCHE

Iffn I ain't goin', you ain't  
goin'.

HAMMOND

(icy)

Lucrezia Borgia... Lucy... drag her  
inside.

The two women stand frozen, shocked by Hammond's request to use violence on their white mistress -- and afraid to do so.

HAMMOND

Go on, I say.

The women start toward Blanche, take her by the arms and pull her across the ground toward the house.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

And don't give her no more corn!

He whips the horses and the carriage moves off. Driving away from the house, he sees Ellen watching and waves goodbye to her.

EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY COURTYARD - NIGHT

TOPAZ, a towering, muscular black -- scars and broken teeth testifying to his fighting experience -- squats on a stool in one corner of the ring. DeMarigny and Lazare LeToscan stand beside him. They are surrounded by a boisterous throng of New Orleans young bloods.

Opposite are Mede, Hammond, Maxwell and Redfield. Maxwell, excited and lively, looks up at the balconies crowded with elegantly dressed men and the stylish girls of the Music Academy. He grins at Madame Caroline who is circulating collecting bets. Then a buxom redhead recognizes Maxwell and blows him a kiss. Another girl, a curvy mulatto, waves to Maxwell. He waves back, a wicked leer on his face, then sighs nostalgically.

Lazare LeToscan walks to the center of the ring. He raises his arms for silence.

LAZARE

Messieurs... et... Madames...  
your attention, please.

He waits for the crowd to quiet down.

LAZARE

This evening, through the kindness  
and gracious hospitality of New  
Orleans' pre-eminent patroness of  
all manly and recreational sports...  
I am alluding to Madame Caroline...

He gestures toward Madame Caroline and the crowd cheers and applauds.

LAZARE

... this evening, we are privileged  
to witness an epic battle between  
Mister Hammond Maxwell's slave  
Mede...

The crowd again applauds enthusiastically. Hammond whispers something to Mede who then stands and bows awkwardly.

( CONTINUED )

LAZARE

... and the slave belonging to  
Marquis Bernard DeMarigny... Topaz...

DeMarigny bows... to a new burst of applause.

LAZARE

... champion of the Island of  
Jamaica...

ANOTHER ANGLE

While Lazare goes on with his announcement, DeMarigny takes a small phial containing a white powder from his pocket. He hands it to Topaz who places it to his nostrils and inhales deeply.

DeMARIGNY

If you win... you'll get more.

TOPAZ

I a-goin' to win...

ACROSS THE RING

Hammond watches astounded. He turns anxiously to Redfield.

REDFIELD

Don't worry. Make him wild at  
first... but it won't las'. They  
countin' on winnin' quick.

Hammond glances nervously across the ring at Topaz, then turns back to Mede.

HAMMOND

You fight slow, Mede... wear him  
out.

He puts his hand encouragingly on Mede's shoulder but his eyes are heavy with concern.

BACK TO LAZARE

in the center of the ring.

LAZARE

Very well... LET THEM FIGHT!

Topaz leaps into the ring, skips about friskily. Mede's steps are slower, weighted. Then he stands

(CONTINUED)



with his legs apart, his fists raised in a clumsy defense.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hammond turns his gaze from the fighters to Redfield.

HAMMOND

(panicky)

That Topaz a seasoned fighter.  
Mede cain't whup him nowadays...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Topaz dances around Mede, striking out with his long arms, breaking through Mede's defense at will. Powerful blows smash into Mede's right eye, making it swell. More blows and Mede's lip splits, blood gushing down his chin. Mede is unable to counter. He absorbs more punches -- it is not a fight but a flogging. The spectators begin to jeer.

Now Topaz curses and taunts Mede as he pounds him. Then Mede advances -- making no attempt to protect himself -- and delivers a mighty punch straight to the crucifix tattoo in the center of Topaz's chest. Topaz staggers back. Mede follows with another punch... and Topaz crashes to the ground.

Mede leaps on top of Topaz. But Topaz extricates his arms, claws at Mede's flesh, drawing blood -- and jumps to his feet. Mede starts to rise but Topaz fells him with a blow to the head.

The audience roars approval. Maxwell is bouncing up and down in his chair with excitement, enjoying the fight, seemingly unconcerned about Mede's plight. But Hammond looks stricken, his hands clenched.

Mede reaches out, grabs Topaz's leg and brings him down. Topaz tries to kick Mede in the groin -- but Mede rolls away in time. Mede stumbles to his feet... plunges at Topaz, slamming his knees into Topaz's face. Topaz screams with pain, but locks his arms around Mede, pulls him down and sinks his teeth into Mede's ear lobe, half-ripping it off. Then Topaz crashes one devastating blow after another into Mede's bleeding face.

Hammond can't bear it any longer, takes a step forward shouting.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED - (3):

64

HAMMOND

I yield the fight! I'll pay the bets!

Doc Redfield pulls him back and his cry is lost in the din of the crowd.

Mede manages to wrap his arms around Topaz, momentarily halting the punches. Panting, exhausted, the two fighters roll from side to side of the ring -- forcing spectators to jump away to avoid them. Topaz jams his elbows into Mede's kidneys and neck, shoves Mede's head into the turf.

The end seems near for Mede. For a flash instant, he catches sight of Hammond's anguished eyes and hears Maxwell's voice.

MAXWELL

Mede... keep a-goin'! You kin whup him!

Mede responds with a last superhuman effort -- a sledgehammer blow to Topaz's temple -- then falls back. Topaz stays on top of him, pinning him to the ground.

Lazare enters the ring to declare victory for Topaz. But suddenly Mede flings his arms around Topaz, pulls his body down tight against himself, his jaw working against Topaz's neck. Topaz shrieks, chokes, and his body shudders convulsively, his legs twitching.

Lazare returns to his corner -- the fight is still on. Seconds tick by... the pair lie still, Topaz on top. Lazare enters the ring again -- Topaz apparently the victor. He pulls Topaz off Mede -- but Topaz is limp as a rag doll, blood spurting from his neck, his jugular vein severed. He is dead.

Mede tries to rise but drops back into the dust. His lips and teeth are stained with blood. Hammond rushes up to him, incredulous.

HAMMOND

We won! We killed him!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Lazare LeToscan raises his arms to announce the outcome.

LAZARE

I declare Mister Hammond Maxwell's Mede... THE WINNER!

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED - (4):

64

## ANOTHER ANGLE

The crowd roars. Maxwell is on his feet screeching. Men exchange money, settling bets with each other and Madame Caroline. DeMarigny walks over to Topaz, gazes contemptuously at the body.

DEMARIGNY

Somebody haul this heap of merde away.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Redfield slings a bucket of water over Mede who is kneeling on the ground. Hammond tries to heave him to his feet. Redfield gives Mede a pint of whiskey.

HAMMOND

Drink it.

Maxwell comes over, radiant.

MAXWELL

DeMarigny jest offer ten thousan' dollars fer Mede.

HAMMOND

I ain't a-sellin' him to make him fight agin.

MAXWELL

(amazed)

Ten thousan' dollars...

HAMMOND

(furious)

Always you wantin' a Mandingo.  
Now you craves to sell him...!

He turns to Mede and looks over Mede's bloody, lacerated face and body -- and his eyes fill with pain and guilt. He puts his arm around Mede, starts to lead him off. They pass two men dragging the body of Topaz away. Mede looks at Topaz. For a moment, horror and bewilderment flash in his eyes -- then he looks quickly away.

65 INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

65

The room is in wild disarray. Blanche lies sprawled across the bed, her eyes burning with drunken fury. Suddenly she reaches out, seizes a glass from the

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

bedside table, gulps down its contents -- and flings it blindly to the floor. Then she rises and screams hysterically.

BLANCHE

Tense! TENSE!

Tense runs in terrified.

BLANCHE

Bring me that wench... that slut  
... Ellen...!

Tense hesitates, her frightened eyes riveted on her mistress. Blanche staggers toward her menacingly.

BLANCHE

FETCH HER, I SAY... FETCH HER!

She swings her arm to slap Tense and misses. Tense runs out of the room. Blanche totters over to a chest of drawers and rummages around -- finally finds a riding crop. She begins to lash the bed crazily, then the furniture, the walls.

66

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

66

Fearfully, Tense and Ellen walk toward the bedroom door. Ellen stops panic-stricken in front of the door. Then Tense shoves her into the room.

67

INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

67

The girls enter the room, are horrified to see Blanche brandishing a whip. Blanche stares viciously at Ellen.

BLANCHE

Git off them clothes, wench...  
all of 'em!

TENSE

(barely audible)  
Miz Blanche... Ellen... knocked...

For a moment, Blanche is jarred into immobility. Then she erupts with insane rage.

BLANCHE

You knocked! YOU KNOCKED! YOU  
WON'T BE KNOCKED! I'm a-goin' to  
whup that sucker right outn you!

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

She lashes the whip across Ellen's body. Proudly, Ellen makes no move to defend herself. Demonically, Blanche whips her again and again, screaming abuse with every blow. Tense flees from the room.

BIANCHE

Filthy... filthy... pig... whut you do with men?... play the who', the slut... doin' things only a filthy wench knows... sickenin' things, sinful black as your skin... you an animal... dumb, fornicatin' animal... !

Ellen finally screams, unable to hold herself back any longer. She falls to the floor weeping. Blanche stands over her lashing and lashing.

Lucrezia Borgia and Tense enter. With Blanche's attention momentarily distracted by their entrance, Ellen sees her chance to escape. She scrambles to her feet, races from the room. Blanche runs after her. Lucrezia Borgia grabs Blanche by the arm to stop her, but Blanche wrests free.

68

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BIANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

68

Ellen flies toward the stairway, Blanche pursuing, catches up with her at the head of the stairs, seizes her by the hair, lashes her again, then shoves her spinning down the stairs.

69

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE NEAR FALCONHURST - DAY

69

The carriage is approaching the plantation. Hammond sits in back with the bruised and battered Mede. His eyes are mere slits between purple, puffy lids -- his lips grossly swollen. He seems dejected -- beyond the effect of his injuries. Redfield, at the reins, and Maxwell sit in front.

MAXWELL

We won some fancy money an' folks everywhere goin' to hear about Falconhurst.

MEDE

(distantly, shaking his head)

Nothin' be worth that kind o' fightin'... killin'...

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

Maxwell is outraged by Mede's statement -- sheer insolence. Hammond, though surprised, seems to agree. Maxwell waits for Hammond to reprimand Mede.

MAXWELL

(finally)

You a-lettin' him say that!

HAMMOND

I guess I is.

Maxwell scowls at his son.

Maxwell seems to remember something. He takes two boxes from his pocket and hands them to Hammond.

MAXWELL

(grudging)

You do rile me sometimes, Ham.  
Here...

Hammond opens the boxes. Inside them are a ruby necklace and a pair of ruby earrings.

MAXWELL

I reckoned you ought to bring  
your wife a present. Them rubies.  
White ladies fond o' them.

Hammond looks up at his father as though ready to say something, decides not to. He puts the boxes in his pocket without further interest.

70

EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

70

The carriage halts in front of the house. Lucrezia Borgia, Dite, Meg and Alph come running out.

MAXWELL

He won! He won! Killed that  
Topaz jest like that... bit him |  
in the neck... blood spurt like  
a fountain!

Lucrezia Borgia, Dite, Meg and Alph look admiringly at Mede. The attention picks up his spirits, he starts to smile. Agamemnon appears, takes the bridles off the horses -- and looks piercingly at Mede. The smile dies on Mede's face.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

Lucrezia Borgia helps Maxwell out of the carriage. He notices the anxiety on her face.

MAXWELL

How be everythin', Lucrezia Borgia?

LUCREZIA BORGIA

(unconvincingly)

Fine, Masta.

She turns away -- and Maxwell senses something's wrong. He follows her into the house. Hammond and Redfield help Mede from the carriage and they start walking toward Lucy's cabin. Redfield and Hammond stride on ahead, Mede lagging behind, walking slowly and painfully. [Agamemnon turns the horses over to Alph and walks up to Mede.]

AGAMEMNON

'Congratulations, Mede. Not ev'ry black man git to kill 'nother black man. Kill two... three mo'... mayhap yo' skin turn white.

MEDE

(defensive)

That Topaz... he out to kill me.

AGAMEMNON

The white man do like his games... set two niggers on each other like two craze dogs.

Mede looks away, his expression distant -- and sad -- walks on to Lucy's cabin.

71 ELIMINATED

71

72 INT. SITTING ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

72

Maxwell stares at Lucrezia Borgia, his face drawn, intense. He waits for her to speak. Finally, she stifles her sobs.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

(brokenly)

Miz Blanche... Miz Blanche... she was tipsy. She sen' fer Ellen an' she whup her good.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

72

LUCREZIA BORGIA (cont'd)  
 (fearing to say it)  
 Then Ellen... Ellen... done slip  
 her sucker.

Maxwell is stunned. Then his eyes become thoughtful.

MAXWELL  
 Whure is she?

73 INT. KITCHEN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

73

Ellen sits huddled in a chair. Maxwell and Lucrezia Borgia enter. Without ceremony, Maxwell pulls up Ellen's shift and examines her, views the welt on her skin from Blanche's whip.

MAXWELL  
 Masta Hammond ain't a-goin' to  
 see this... can't see you nekid.  
 You tell him you aillin'...  
 unnderstan'?

Ellen nods.

MAXWELL  
 You tell Masta Hammond you  
 slipped the sucker cause you fell  
 on the stairs. You say nothin'  
 'bout Miz Blanche. Ifn you say  
 anythin', I'll sell you.

ELLEN  
 (terrorized)  
 I says nothin', Masta.

She bursts into tears. Maxwell turns to go as Hammond walks into the cabin. Ellen quickly pulls the shift down over her body.

MAXWELL  
 Ham... Ellen slipped her sucker.

Shocked, Hammond bends down, embraces the girl. She clings to him, quivering.

MAXWELL  
 Fell she did... on the stairs  
 ... lucky she ain't maimed.

(CONTINUED)



73 CONTINUED:

73

Ellen is crying and Hammond rocks her tenderly in his arms.

HAMMOND

It's all right, Ellen. It's all right.

Maxwell glowers at his son's display of affection for a

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

a wench and stalks away. Lucrezia Borgia follows him out of the kitchen. Ellen continues to sob. Hammond caresses her, trying to console her, then takes out one of the two boxes that his father gave him.

HAMMOND

I done fetched you somethin' from the city, somethin' to make you purty.

He gives her the box. She opens it, stares in amazement at the ruby necklace. Her eyes still brim with tears -- but a tiny smile brushes her mouth.

ELLEN

Fer me! It purty enough fer a white lady.

74 INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - DUSK

74

Maxwell speaks to Blanche in a harsh, angry tone he's never used with her before.

MAXWELL

You actin' zany... zany... behavin' like a Georgia bitch. An' look at yourself in the mirror! Ain't you got no pride?

He drags her roughly to the looking glass and forces Blanche to view her reflection -- witch-like, hair dishevelled, her clothes dirty.

MAXWELL

You lookin' like this, any wench kin attract a man more'n you. Comb up your hair.

Blanche pouts, then turns away insolently.

MAXWELL

CCMB UP YOUR HAIR, I SAY!

Intimidated, Blanche picks up her comb and begins stroking her hair. Maxwell walks to the door, opens it, shouts out.

MAXWELL

Hammond! HAMMOND! You come up here.

BLANCHE

It all Hammond's fault.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

It ain't Hammond... it those damned toddies you so fond of.

BLANCHE

He jest like the wenches better.

MAXWELL

A man craves to pleasure his wife  
... time to time.

BLANCHE

They do dirty things... ain't got  
no shame.

MAXWELL

(hissing)

Then you a-goin' to do dirty things  
... jest so you git him in your bed  
... keep him there!

Blanche tilts her chin, offended. Hammond enters the room. Maxwell looks from one to the other.

MAXWELL

Whut fer you two don't ack like a  
real husban' an' wife? I don't  
know... but you a-goin' to start.  
I ain't leavin' this life without  
seein' my own flesh an' blood here  
at Falconhurst to take over. I  
want a gran'son.

He looks at Hammond with a steely expression.

MAXWELL

You got that gift you fetched her.

Hammond nods. Blanche looks at him, surprised and suddenly humble.

BLANCHE

You brung me a gift?

Hammond takes the box out of his pocket. Maxwell walks to the door, removes the key from the lock.

MAXWELL

You two a-goin' to get down to  
business now. I'm a-lockin' you  
in... an' I ain't lettin' you out  
... till you done pleasin'.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED - (2):

74

He leaves, closes the door behind him. The key is HEARD turning in the lock. Hammond and Blanche gaze uncomfortably at each other. Then Blanche timidly reaches out for the box which Hammond still hasn't given her. She takes it, opens it, smiles joyously.

BLANCHE

They... jest beautiful, Hammond!

She goes to the mirror and puts on the earrings, turns her head from side to side, admiring them.

BLANCHE

Now folks goin' to know who your wife!

She turns slowly and gazes at Hammond lovingly. Then she runs to him, throws her arms around him and kisses him long and hard. Hammond can't help but respond to her rush of feeling.

75 ELIMINATED

75

76 EXT. COTTON FIELDS - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

76

A dour afternoon with a fine drizzle. The ground is muddy from heavy rains. Hammond and Mede, bruised but healing, ride across the fields, then rein their horses. Hammond looks out over the fields.

HAMMOND

My Papa don't like cotton...  
says it's treacherous. An'  
our lan' washaway.

(pauses)

This rain don't stop, all the  
bolls be blasted.

MEDE

You reckon iff'n a nigger owned  
lan', the cotton come up black?

HAMMOND

(laughs)

Goin' to tell that one to my Pa  
... make him laugh.

MEDE

Jes' don' tell him who say it.

Hammond eyes Mede curiously.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

That be a strange thing fer  
you to be statin', Mede.

(pauses)

You ever fret 'bout that, Mede,  
bein' free?

MEDE

Don' do no good a-thinkin'  
'bout it.

HAMMOND

Some do.

MEDE

Some do.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

(probing)

What iffn I said... you free,  
Mede... you got your freedom?

Mede doesn't answer immediately. There is a sudden  
glint in his eyes, a trace of a bitter smile on his  
lips.

MEDE

(finally)

I happy here, Masta.

Hammond nods, satisfied and smiling.

HAMMOND

Right now, you doin' whut I'm  
doin'... jest the same... ridin',  
sittin' on a horse, seein' the  
fields. You be free... you  
wouldn't be doin' as good.

He chirrups his horse and they trot through the fields.

77

INT. KITCHEN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

77

Lucrezia Borgia, Dite and Agamemnon are preparing the  
family supper. Hammond enters with Mede.

HAMMOND

Whut we eatin', Lucrezia Borgia?

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Stewed chicken, dumplin's, greens.

HAMMOND

Give Mede the same.

He walks out of the room. Mede sits down at the table  
and Lucrezia Borgia starts to serve him.

MEDE

Masta Hammon' say he ruther  
raise cotton than slaves. He  
got God in him.

AGAMEMNON

He don' ack like he got God in  
him... nor his Pa. We all God's  
chil'ren... black an' white...  
the Sacred Scriptures say.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

MEDE

He purty good fer a white man.

AGAMEMNON

That ain't good enough.

MEDE

How good you 'speck a white man  
kin git!

AGAMEMNON

Jes' the side o' Satan.

DITE

Whure that talk goin' to git you,  
Mem?

LUCREZIA BORGIA

'Nother lambastin', tha's whut.

Agamemnon looks sourly at Lucrezia Borgia and walks out.

78 ELIMINATED

78

79 INT. DINING ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

79

Hammond, Maxwell, Blanche and Doc Redfield at dinner.  
Blanche is well-dressed and perfectly groomed. Every  
so often her fingers stray to the earrings Hammond gave  
her, drawing reassurance from them.

BLANCHE

(bubbling)

When we build the new house, we  
a-goin' to hol' parties an'  
invite the best folks hereabouts  
... the best folks...

REDFIELD

They got miles to ride... gittin'  
to Falconhurst.

BLANCHE

Distance ain't no problem when  
the party is elegant an' the hosts  
are folk of quality.

MAXWELL

That house a-goin' to cost a  
passel of niggers.

He chuckles, pleased by the knowledge he can well  
afford it.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

Ham, tomorroer, we got to make a list... who we sellin' in Natchez.

BLANCHE

They got fancy shops fer furnishin's in Natchez. My Mama...

The smile on Blanche's lips freezes. Ellen has appeared to hand Lucrezia Borgia a tray. Blanche sees at once -- the ruby necklace on the girl's neck. She rises, livid, but with a great effort at self-possession. She slowly, elaborately removes her earrings... then drops them into Hammond's plate and walks off. The men look at each other bewildered. Then Maxwell notices the necklace on Ellen.

MAXWELL

The necklace, Ham! That were a stupid thing to do!

He looks at Hammond furiously. Hammond rises, a foolish, pained expression on his face. He goes out after Blanche.

80

INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

80

Blanche, hysterical, storms at Hammond.

BLANCHE

That slut... that dirty wench of yourn... you brung her a necklace ... whure else she git it? Might as well burn your letters right on her face... an' mine. Bran' 'em right in, so all the world know we the women of Hammond Maxwell! But I ain't your who' to be marked off!

(pauses, then contemptuously)

You like that black meat?! You ruther pleasure with a baboon!

She sits down heavily on the bed, subsiding. Then she continues viciously.

BLANCHE

Your Pa craves a gran'son... but to make a son you got to be a whole lot better at pleasurin'...

(CONTINUED)



HAMMOND

(coldly)

The man you had afore me... was  
he better at pleasin'... ?

BLANCHE

(deliberately)

Sence you want to know... he was.

Hammond seems dazed by her admission. Her previous denials were preferable, somehow comforting to him. Finally, he speaks.

HAMMOND

Who was it?

Blanche scrutinizes Hammond nastily, considering whether to tell him.

BLANCHE

(finally)

You know who. You never wanted  
to think it. You scared to  
think who it was.

HAMMOND

(a whisper)

Charles.

Now it's Blanche's turn to be stunned -- appalled by the enormity of the exposure. Her body seems to sag, her face drains of color. She looks up at Hammond despairingly.

BLANCHE

(plaintive)

It only happen once, Hammond...  
we didn't know whut we... I was  
thirteen...

She stops speaking -- there is no adequate explanation. She rises, walks unsteadily toward Hammond, reaches out to him, fearfully hoping for some unlikely understanding and forgiveness. He turns away.

81 ELIMINATED

81

82 EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

82

The procession for Natchez is forming outside the house. Maxwell, assisted by Lucrezia Borgia,

(CONTINUED)

is checking a list to see that all the slaves to be sold are present. Several of the blacks embrace each other -- a few crying grievously at the separation from their loved ones. Blanche watches in the b.g. The CAMERA MOVES to one black couple clinging to each other.

BLACK MAN

Don' fret... Masta' Hammon' won' sell me to a mean man.

BLACK WOMAN

How kin he tell who mean?  
(choking back sobs)  
We never goin' to see each other agin, Jason.

She cries bitterly.

BLACK MAN

Mayhap we do, the Lord willin'.

BLACK WOMAN

No... never. You knows that, Jason. Never.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A black mother, crying, hugs her two children, about seven and eight, who stand frozen with fear.

BLACK CHILD

When we come back to you, mama?  
(waits)  
When, mama.

SECOND CHILD

Whut fer you can't come with us, mama?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hammond arrives, sees Dite, sobbing, standing next to a woman holding an infant. He walks over to Maxwell.

HAMMOND

Papa, we ain't sellin' Dite's sucker.

(CONTINUED)

MAXWELL

You teched... we sold all the  
other suckers of yourn.

Hammond turns, walks over to Dite. Maxwell follows him.

HAMMOND

Dite, take your sucker. You  
kin keep it.

MAXWELL

Dite, don't you touch... you  
leave that sucker alone!

HAMMOND

Dite, grab that sucker -- and  
git outn here quick!

Dite, with a fearful glance at Maxwell, snatches her  
baby and runs off.

MAXWELL

You a fool, Hammond.

HAMMOND

(softly)

Mayhap.

(somehow puzzled)

It jest... how I feel.

He kisses his father, then turns and looks around. He  
sees Ellen.

HAMMOND

Ellent!

She comes running.

HAMMOND

Git in the carriage.

(sees the fear  
in her face)

No, I ain't agoin' to sell you.  
I crave you come with me.

Ellen looks with breathless wonder to see if he really  
means it, then climbs into the carriage. Maxwell watches  
in amazement.

MAXWELL

I don't unnerstan' you, Ham.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED - (3):

82

Anxiously he turns around for a glance at Blanche, who is observing the scene, standing rigid as a rock, her eyes flinty with hatred. Hammond kisses his father again, gets into the carriage and shouts the order.

HAMMOND

Everyone... we goin'!

The blacks move off in a ragged file. A few of the blacks remaining behind burst into tears again. Two or three women are heard wailing.

83 INT. HALLWAY - FALCONHURST HOUSE - DUSK

83

Meg comes through the hall carrying a tray with glasses of toddy. He walks to the sitting room door, opens it a chink. He motions to his brother Alph, jerking his head to indicate that he wants Alph to come with him. But Alph lies on the floor in front of Maxwell's chair with Maxwell's feet pressed against his belly. He cannot move without disturbing the sleeping old man. Alph shakes his head, gestures helplessly with his hands. Meg grins wickedly and goes on the stairs with the tray.

84 INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - DUSK

84

Blanche, semi-nude and well-sodden, walks aimlessly about the room, pauses at the window, opens it, takes a deep breath.

MEG (O.S.)

Miz Blanche...

She turns to see Meg holding out the tray with the glasses. She takes one without covering her naked breasts. As she drinks, Meg stares at her, transfixed by her nakedness. He giggles nervously. Blanche becomes aware she is exposed, glances down at herself, then looks at Meg with drunken amusement.

BLANCHE

You ain't never seen a white lady's breasties?

Meg shakes his head almost imperceptibly.

BLANCHE

You like 'em? Ellen's titties any better'n mine?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BLANCHE (cont'd)

(pauses)

You answer me! Ellen's titties  
any better'n mine?!

MEG

(stammering)

Yourn better, Miz Blanche.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

Blanche smiles crookedly, then covers herself and takes another deep swallow of toddy.

BLANCHE

You fergit whut you see. Now  
... git!

Meg starts to go. Blanche stares at him as he retreats toward the door.

BLANCHE

Wait a secon'.

Meg faces her, suddenly apprehensive from an undercurrent in her voice.

BLANCHE

Fetch me up here the bigges',  
blackes' buck we got on the  
place. That Mede. Fetch him  
through the front an' up the  
steps quiet-like...

Meg agape, whirls and tears out of the room.

85 EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - NIGHT 85

Meg races toward Lucy's cabin.

86 INT. LUCY'S CABIN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - NIGHT 86

Lucy is rubbing Mede with the serpent oil when Meg appears out of breath. Big Pearl and her baby are also present.

MEG

Mede... Miz Blanche want you.

MEDE

She want me!

MEG

She waitin' in her room.

MEDE

Whut she want o' me?

LUCY

Mayhap she want to whup you like  
Ellen.

MEG

Miz Blanche drunken. I reckon  
she cravin' somebody to pleasure  
her.

(CONTINUED)

86

CONTINUED:

86

Mede looks appalled. He shakes his head dizzily.

LUCY

(scoffing)

A white mist'ess ain't a-craivin'  
no big, black lummoX like him.

But her expression changes to concern.

MEDE

I ain't got no leave to go in  
that house... Masta Hammon'  
away.

MEG

(sarcastic)

White folks' orders.

LUCY

(disturbed)

She do anythin'. Mede, you jes'  
scuttle out.

Meg throws a glance at Mede and starts to go. Mede follows anxiously.

87

EXT. FALCONHURST PLANTATION - NIGHT

87

Meg leads Mede toward the house. Mede stops in his tracks, stands immobile. Meg glances back at him sharply and Mede finally starts walking again.

88

INT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

88

Mede and Meg enter and mount the stairs furtively. Lucrezia Borgia comes into the hall, sees them going upstairs. Her eyes widen with alarm. Meg knocks on the door of Elanche's room. Agamemnon appears below, out of breath.

AGAMEMNON

No... Mede... no...!

Mede looks down at Agamemnon, his expression helpless and frightened. The door opens and Elanche stands there, drying the drink-induced perspiration on her face with a towel. Agamemnon and Lucrezia Borgia below scurry away.

Mede and Meg stand at the threshold unmoving. Mede is too afraid to step inside the room. Elanche studies them silently for a beat or two, a reckless, arrogant smile on her lips.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCHE

(to Meg)

You git... an' I mean git! I  
ketch you snoopin', a-listenin',  
I'll thrash you.

Meg turns and goes, a sly grin stealing across his face.

BLANCHE

(to Mede)

Come in here.

(waits, then  
harshly)

I'm a-tellin' you...

Mede obeys, enters trembling.

INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

Blanche closes the door behind Mede, faces him.

BLANCHE

You listen to this story, Mede.  
You listen an' listen good.

She looks at him, her eyes glittering. She points to  
the bed.

BLANCHE

Sit there!

Mede's face flashes with terror. He stands unmoving.

BLANCHE

SIT THERE! ON THE BED!

(smiles)

That's whure you goin' to listen  
to my story.

Mede walks slowly to the bed, sits down as though easing  
himself onto a pallet of nails. Blanche looks at him  
silently, her eyes lit with a perverse delight. Then  
in a little girl voice:

BLANCHE

One day I'm walkin' in the wood...  
jest a-walkin' along... an'...  
an' you come up all sweet-like...  
an' all of a sudden, you attack  
me. Jest like that, you attack  
me...

MEDE

Miz Blanche...!

(CONTINUED)



BLANCHE

YOU LISTEN! You attack me...  
an' then when your Masta Hammond  
come home, I tell him... I tell  
him you tried to rape me.

She pauses, letting this sink in. Then she walks  
toward Mede, continues.

BLANCHE

Whut you think he do to you?  
Whup you, sell you? No. Whut  
he'd do... whut he'd do...  
he'd kill you. He'd kill you,  
Mede.

MEDE

He won' believe you, Miz Blanche.

She slaps him wildly across the face.

BLANCHE

He'll believe me. He won't  
believe a nigger.

Mede looks abject. He knows that what she has just  
said is only too true.

BLANCHE

That's whut I'm a-goin' to tell  
him... less'n you do whut I want.  
You do whut I want, I tell him  
nothin'.

Blanche touches him sensually on the face, then runs  
her fingers down his chest.

BLANCHE

You ain't never craved a white  
lady, Mede?

She presses her body against him, wraps her arms around  
his neck. She gazes at him, a wanton challenge in her  
eyes. She starts to kiss him.

Lucrezia Borgia stands looking up at the bedroom door  
-- utter dread on her face. Agamemnon and Dite come  
into the hall. She shoos them away with a curt wave  
of her hand. Then she turns and walks despondently  
away.

91 IN BLANCHE'S ROOM

91

Mede lies naked on his back in the bed, staring at the ceiling. Blanche, lying beside him, regards him with a vengeful smile. Finally, Mede speaks.

MEDE

(tonelessly)

I craves to die, Miz Blanche.

BLANCHE

You ain't a-goin' to die. You a-goin' to do this whenever I wish.

She reaches for a drink. Sipping it, she gazes at Mede through narrowed lids -- then stares blankly past him, her expression remote and vindictive.

92 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

92

Mede emerges from the room, walks toward the stairs apathetically -- a study in despair. Halfway down the stairs, he starts to run. He gets out of the front door an instant before Maxwell walks sleepily out of the sitting room. Lucrezia appears from the back of the house. Maxwell sniffs the air.

MAXWELL

Somethin' stink. That Doctor Mulbach's Serpent Ool, like...

LUCREZIA BORGIA

(a lie, quaking)

I cain't smell nuthin', Masta.

MAXWELL

You ain't had that Mandingo in the house...?

LUCREZIA BORGIA

No, Masta, suh.

Maxwell gazes around, perplexed.

93 EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

93

Mede walks through the compound, depressed, dragging his feet, his eyes swimming. Several blacks turn surreptitiously to watch him as he passes. He continues past blacksmith.

94. EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

94

He shambles along a while, then flings himself to the ground. Agamemnon appears, stands looking down at him.

AGAMEMNON

Everybody know whut happen.

(after a pause)

Masta Hammon' fin' out... he  
kill you.

Mede stares up at him hopelessly.

AGAMEMNON

I was you... I runs away.

MEDE

Whure I run? They fin' you on  
the road, they kills you... or  
bring you back. Then Masta  
Hammon' wonder whut fer I run.

For a moment, guilt overcomes his fear.

MEDE

He been good to me, Mem...

He face is sheer agony.

AGAMEMNON

You don' git nothin' from a  
white man... you don' pay fer  
it later.

(pauses)

White man's rules, white man's  
games. A white man pleasure a  
black woman, that be jes' fine...  
God's law an' angels singin'.  
A white woman pleasure with a  
black man... that be a sin  
worse'n nailin' God to the  
cross.

95

INT. LUCY'S CABIN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

95

Big Pearl lies on the bed, moaning in childbirth.  
Lucy holds a wet rag to her forehead. Mede sits  
on the floor, watching blankly.

BIG PEARL

It hurtin' agin.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

LUCY

That the way it do.

Big Pearl moans again.

LUCY

Jes' be a while. It comin'...  
the sucker comin'...

BIG PEARL

Whut Mede doin'?

LUCY

Sittin'. Whut you wants him  
to do?

96 EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

96

Hammond and Ellen, returning in the carriage, drive past toward the house. Dite, her infant in her arms, hails Hammond.

DITE

Masta... Masta Hammon'! Big  
Pearl done have a little buck.

Hammond reins in the horses, says something to Ellen and gets out of the carriage. He hurries toward Lucy's cabin.

97 INT. LUCY'S CABIN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

97

Big Pearl lies holding her squalling, newborn infant. She hands it to Lucy for comforting. Mede looks on, a sad, distant smile on his face. As Hammond enters, Mede averts his gaze and edges out of the doorway.

HAMMOND

Mede! Whure you goin'?

But he is too intent on seeing the baby to pay more attention to Mede's odd departure. He takes the infant from Lucy's arms.

HAMMOND

You all right, Big Pearl?

He starts examining the baby carefully.

BIG PEARL

I fine. It jes' pop out like  
a seed outn a peach.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Whut fer you tell that lie!

Hammond is still inspecting the baby minutely.

HAMMOND

Sure a big varmint.

LUCY

A champeen like his Pa.

Hammond looks around for Mede, calls out.

HAMMOND

Mede... MEDE!

Mede enters and Hammond scrutinizes the black's down-cast face.

HAMMOND

Whut wrong with you, Mede?  
Ain't you glad whut a fine  
sucker you give Big Pearl?  
(to Lucy)  
My Papa seen it yet?

Lucy shakes her head.

HAMMOND

I crave to show it to him.

He starts toward the door, the infant in his arms.

HAMMOND

You come with me, Mede.

Mede follows Hammond out the door.

EXT. LUCY'S CABIN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

They walk toward the house.

HAMMOND

I want lots of suckers like  
this, Mede. Couple of months,  
Big Pearl be ready fer breedin'  
agin.

Hammond quickens his pace, eager to display the infant to his father.

Maxwell, with the air of an expert, studies the infant that Hammond holds before him. Mede, his face tense, stands several paces away.

MAXWELL

I've seen 'em, hundreds. Ain't no more'n black worms at first. But this a Mandingo, purentee Mandingo!

HAMMOND

A ringtail snorter. An' soun'.

MAXWELL

A body would think it was yours.

Then he looks meaningfully at Hammond and codes his words.

MAXWELL

You see... there weren't no harm... Big Pearl... Mede.

Blanche sweeps into the room, beautifully dressed and groomed, remarkably self-composed.

BLANCHE

Welcome home, husban' Hammond.

She kisses him sweetly and Hammond glances at her, surprised by her civility and her appearance. Her eyes flick past Mede without expression, opaque. Mede does not dare to look at her.

HAMMOND

You see Mede's sucker?

BLANCHE

Right purty.

Hammond is further surprised by her pleasant answer. Maxwell takes two silver dollars from his pocket, holds them out to Mede.

MAXWELL

Here, Mede. You deserve 'em.

Mede refuses the money with a sad shake of his head.

HAMMOND

(laughs)

Mede's too proud... an' shy... to take the money.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

He hands the infant to Mede.

HAMMOND

Take it back to Big Pearl.

Mede, carrying the baby, moves toward the door.

MAXWELL

You tell Big Pearl to give him  
lots of milk. Way she tittied  
out, she got milk fer a dozen  
suckers.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED - (2):

99

Maxwell chuckles. Mede leaves.

MAXWELL

(musing)

We kin sell that sucker for  
two... three thousan' dollars  
I reckon.

(pauses, sniffs)

That Mede... still got that  
serpent ool stink...

He frowns, a puzzled expression on his face, looks  
toward the door through which Mede exited.

BLANCHE

(to Hammond)

You craves a whiskey, Hammond?

Hammond looks at her quizzically, but somehow pleased  
by her solicitude.

HAMMOND

You behavin' most lady-like,  
Blanche?

BLANCHE

I'm happy you back, Hammond.

She smiles artfully at him.

99A ELIMINATED

99A

100 EXT. BUILDING SITE - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

100

Slaves are erecting the scaffolding of a new house.  
The foundations indicate it's to be a spacious resi-  
dence. Maxwell and Blanche come walking from the old  
house. Blanche makes a low, gasping sound, seems a  
bit dizzy on her feet. Maxwell eyes her knowingly,  
ready to help. Then Blanche recovers and they walk  
on. Finally they stop to survey the new structure.

MAXWELL

That a-goin' to be the proudest'  
house in the state.

Blanche makes a half-retching sound again, touches her  
stomach.

BLANCHE

I'm ailin' a mite.

(CONTINUED)



100 CONTINUED:

100

MAXWELL  
(a canny smile)  
Sick to yer belly?

Blanche nods and Maxwell chuckles.

MAXWELL  
You jest like Hammond's mama...  
modest-like. She wouldn't tell  
... jest wouldn't tell she was  
knocked. Plagued her to tell.  
Her a-bulgin' out, only way I  
had of knowin'.

They both glance down at Blanche's belly which is just beginning to protrude. Blanche looks up at Maxwell with a curious expression of shyness and anxiety.

MAXWELL  
That why I got the new house  
a-buildin'... when I see the  
first signs.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

He smiles happily at her.

MAXWELL

It time Hammond knows, Blanche.

She nods, forces a smile, her eyes shadowed with foreboding. They start walking back to the house.

MAXWELL

She kep' it hidden... petticoats  
an' petticoats! I never knowed  
Hammond a-comin' along till two  
months afore.

He laughs, remembering.

101 INT. SITTING ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

101

Blanche faces Hammond. Maxwell watches beaming.

BLANCHE

I'm with chile, Hammond.

Hammond barely reacts, his emotions a whirl of contradictions.

MAXWELL

(exuberant)

A white son, Ham! A white son!

The import of this -- a white heir -- blots out for the moment past antagonisms. Hammond tentatively reaches out and takes Blanche's hand.

HAMMOND

(a new tenderness)

That be the reason you been  
actin' so nice?

He looks at Blanche fondly. She returns his gaze joylessly.

102 INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

102

Blanche lies in bed half-asleep. Hammond enters, pauses at her bedside uncertainly. She opens her eyes, looks uneasily at Hammond. He seems to reach a decision, starts to undress... and Blanche smiles faintly.

HAMMOND

(making conversation)

That little Mandingo buck of Mede's,  
it's a-growin' like a tornado.

(CONTINUED)

Blanche's smile disappears, her face webs with anxiety. There is a strained silence.

BLANCHE

(finally)

Hammond... you reckon I'm goin' to die?

HAMMOND

Yer mama didn't die... my mama didn't die... least in chile-bearin'. You ain't goin' to die.

BLANCHE

Mayhap you treat me better now?

Hammond sits down on the edge of the bed.

HAMMOND

(nodding)

When I see you the first time, you was gay... an' brave. You got to be the same way agin.

BLANCHE

(plaintive)

You git my mama to come when it's time?

HAMMOND

Yes.

BLANCHE

(a whisper)

You still a-hatin' me? Fer Charles?

HAMMOND

My feelin's ... all mixed...

BLANCHE

Hammond... hol' my hand.

She stretches out her hand and Hammond takes it. She lies back on the pillows. She looks at Hammond and then away, gazing toward the window, her eyes suddenly clouding with terror.

104 EXT. FALCONHURST PLANTATION - DAY

104

Hammond and Mede are riding back toward the house. Hammond sees Ellen doing laundry at the stream. She turns away the instant she sees him, gathers her laundry, walks in the opposite direction.

HAMMOND

Hol' on, Mede.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

Mede reins in his horse, waits. Hammond rides over to Ellen, dismounts.

HAMMOND

Why you turn... walk away like that?

Ellen -- her back to Hammond -- says nothing, her face glazed with fear. Hammond takes her by the arm.

HAMMOND

Whut fer?

He turns her around, sees her frightened face for the first time.

HAMMOND

You afeared cause Blanche goin' to have a sucker? That no reason, Ellen. It won't change us none. We'll be the same.

He kisses her on the forehead.

HAMMOND

Iffn that's whut's worryin' you, it's wrong. You always goin' to be mine. Ain't nobody, ever, white or black, goin' to take your place.

Ellen throws herself into Hammond's arms.

ELLEN

I jes' scared, Hammon'... jes' so scared.

Hammond seems bewildered, doesn't know quite what to do.

HAMMOND

(concerned)

I'll see you tonight.

He kisses her, mounts his horse, rides back to Mede.

HAMMOND

I swan... everybody actin' peculiar. Ellen bein' 'sterical... you been a gloom... goin' round like a whapped cur.

He stares at Mede, perplexed.

MEDE

(grimly)

I git better, Masta... I be better.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED - (2):

104

Suddenly the air is shattered by the echo of GUNSHOTS coming from the nearby hills. Hammond looks up in alarm, whips his horse and gallops off. Mede follows.

105 EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - DAY

105

Hammond and Mede arrive as a group of men on horseback, armed with rifles, come galloping down the drive to the house. Wallace is among the riders. Maxwell and Lucrezia Borgia come out of the house.

WALLACE

Nigger risin', Maxwell! That nigger o' yourn... Cicero... stole a gun from me an' run off... got some others to jine him!

MAXWELL

We ain't seen 'em hereabouts.

FIRST HORSEMAN

We jest ketch two o' them.

Wallace wheels his horse, digs the spurs in and gallops off. The other riders follow.

HAMMOND

You come with me, Mede.

He spurs his horse and rides off after the horsemen, Mede following.

106 EXT. CLINTON PLANTATION - DAY

106

The horsemen gallop toward the Clinton Plantation. Gathered in front of the house are a group of distraught people, blacks and whites. Lying on the ground before them are the bloody bodies of five whites -- two men, a woman and two children. The riders reach them, stop for a few moments to survey the scene. Hammond looks at the corpses with horror and dismay. A man goes up to Wallace, says something to him and points westward. Wallace shouts a command and the horsemen ride off.

107 EXT. CLEARING BY A RIVER - DAY

107

Hammond, Mede and the other horsemen join a second platoon of riders at the edge of the clearing. One rider lies on the ground, bleeding. In the center of the clearing is a tumbledown old shack.

(CONTINUED)

## SECOND HORSEMAN

They in there.

## THIRD HORSEMAN

They wounded Forrest.

Someone FIRES from inside the cabin. Several riders take cover, RETURN FIRE. Suddenly, a black form leaps from the hut.

## WALLACE

It's Cicero!

A rider aims and FIRES. Cicero is hit in the leg, falters, then manages to stagger into the trees. Hammond rides off after Cicero, Mede following.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Other blacks emerge from the hut, scatter in all directions... Wallace's men in pursuit.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Hammond and Mede find the underbrush in the woods too thick to make progress on horseback.

## HAMMOND

Git him.

Mede scrambles off his horse and plunges through the brushwood, slashing the branches away with his arms. He reaches Cicero near the riverbank, pins him to the ground. Cicero stares at Mede in astonishment.

## CICERO

You hol' me fer the white man!  
The white man kill me... you be  
killin' me... you be puttin' the  
rope aroun' my neck yo'self.

(pauses)

What you reckon you is... a  
houn'...? White man say you  
fetch, you fetch! You see me  
hang... you goin' to know...  
you killer a black brother.

Mede seems dazed by Cicero's words. He relaxes his grip and Cicero rises, starts to run off -- when Wallace and another man appear, corner him with guns.

A great throng has collected to witness the executions -- with more people arriving. Present are the riders, people of the plantation and numerous neighbors in carts and surreys. Cicero sits bound to a chair placed in a cart -- visible to everyone, an example. He holds himself erect, proud and defiant.



ANOTHER ANGLE

Mede starts to walk slowly, trance-like, toward Cicero. He reaches the captured slave, stares at him blindly.

CICERO

Mayhap I got away, you didn' ketch me. You remember... you remember al'ays... you killed me... you remember that... you killed me.

Two men pick Cicero up in his chair and begin to carry him toward a stout tree. Mede walks alongside, magnetized.

CICERO

You jes' prove whut the white man sah. We jes' beasts... willin' to do anythin'... kill each other... no mind, no feelin's.

A rider slams a rifle butt into Cicero's face to silence him. Cicero is mute for just a second or two -- then, carried out of reach of his assailant, he speaks again to Mede.

CICERO

Leastwise -- I ain't dying like you a-goin' to die... like a slave. I ain't givin' a life o' sweat an' misery to the white man.

Another white chops him viciously in the throat. Mede seems to wince with the blow. Cicero, choking, is set down next to the tree. A noose hanging from a tree branch is placed around his neck and tightened. The other end of the rope is fastened by one of the

(CONTINUED)



108 CONTINUED:

108

riders to a mule yoked to a cart. Cicero suddenly shouts out at the crowd.

CICERO

You white men was oppress' in  
yo' own lan'... we was free!  
You brought us here in chains  
... but now we here... this  
lan' belong to us like it belong  
to you!

The mule is given a flick of the whip and leaps forward. Cicero, still in his chair, is jerked into the air, dangles there, throttling. He dies.

Mede stands stricken, in a kind of paralysis. Hammond, shaken and pale, comes up to him. He takes Mede by the arm and they walk to their horses, mount and ride. ✓

109 ELIMINATED

109

110 INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST - NIGHT

110

Blanche lies in bed, feverish and sweaty in labor. She moans as the contractions agonize her. MRS. REDFIELD, a heavy, placid woman in her fifties, sponges Blanche's face.

MRS. REDFIELD

Ain't much longer now.

Lucrezia Borgia enters with pots of water and cloths.

111 INT. SITTING ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

111

Maxwell, Redfield and Beatrix Woodford are seated. Hammond paces nervously. Meg enters with a tray of drinks. Maxwell shouts into Beatrix's ear trumpet.

MAXWELL

You got the feelin' it goin'  
to be a boy?

BEATRIX

Better a boy. A girl got to  
face the lusts of men...  
keepin' her knocked, baby after  
baby. Glad I through with it,  
the Major dead. All babies  
ought to be boys.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

The men laugh. Maxwell takes a drink from Meg's tray, offers Beatrix one, which she refuses with a disdainful gesture.

BEATRIX

That lead you straight into the flames of hell... an' make Jesus cry.

MAXWELL

Rheumatiz, Beatrix. Oncet I let my rheumatiz git ahead of my drinkin', I'll never ketch up to it.

Blanche is heard screaming. Hammond walks over to the doorway, looks out and up the stairs.

REDFIELD

Don't fret, Hammond. My wife bring her through safe an' sound. She gifted that way.

Hammond walks back into the room. Blanche's screams are heard again. Beatrix marches up to Hammond.

BEATRIX

Sufferin' like that... she's too young. You a beast, Hammond... a monster!

MRS. REDFIELD'S VOICE

Redfield... kin you help me a secon'.

REDFIELD

(putting his todody down and rising)

'Scuse me. Seems I be needed.

He exits into hall.

(CONTINUED)

111A INT. UPPER HALL - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

111A

LOOKING DOWN staircase, Redfield appears at bottom of stairs and starts up.

REDFIELD

You callin' me? You wantin' me? Whut you reckon I kin do?

112 INT. UPPER HALL - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

112

Mrs. Redfield, the door to Blanche's room closed behind her, waits for her husband. Redfield enters scene.

REDFIELD

It come yet?

MRS. REDFIELD

(whispering)

It come... it come. Only it ain't white.

Redfield reacts in disbelief.

REDFIELD

No!

MRS. REDFIELD

Whut we goin' to do?

REDFIELD

(whispering)

All we do... we jest cut the cord short... an' let it bleed to death.

They enter Blanche's room.

113 INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

113

Redfield and his wife enter. Blanche lies on the bed, inert, staring mindlessly at the black infant beside her. Lucrezia Borgia stands bedside aghast. Redfield walks over to the bed, gazes down at the infant.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

REDFIELD

(despairing)

A Mandingo.

He picks up the baby and carries it to a bassinet standing in one corner. He puts the baby in it -- and we see his arms move as his hands, unseen, untie the umbilical knot. He looks up at his wife.

REDFIELD

That be it. Done.

He turns abruptly and heads for the door.

BLANCHE

(trance-like)

It ain't black... it ain't true  
it's black.

113A INT. STAIRWAY - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

113A

Redfield walks down grimly -- goes to the sitting room doorway.

114 INT. SITTING ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

114

Redfield enters, looks bleakly at Hammond, Maxwell and Beatrix.

REDFIELD

It come... dead.

Beatrix screams. Hammond's face goes ashen. He starts to go toward the doorway, but Redfield grabs him firmly by the arm.

REDFIELD

Not yit. It all messed up.  
You don't want to see it.

HAMMOND

It a boy?

Redfield nods. Hammond suddenly tears his arm free and races out of the room.

114A INT. STAIRWAY - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

114A

Hammond rushes up the stairs. Beatrix appears at the foot of the stairs, begins walking up unsteadily.

115 INT. BLANCHE'S BEDROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

115

Mrs. Redfield stands over the bassinet, looking sadly at the dead infant. Hammond enters, walks to the bassinet, looks in, sees the black baby. He stands immobile, horrified. Blanche can't bear to watch him, turns away, doom in her eyes. Beatrix enters, walks to the bassinet, sees the baby -- a tortured cry issuing from her lips. Lucrezia Borgia stands staring at Hammond, terror in her face.

116 INT. STAIRWAY - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

116

Maxwell and Redfield wait at the foot of the stairs. Hammond appears above on the landing, haggard, ghastly pale. He comes down the stairs, his knees rubbery, one hand on the railing. He reaches Redfield.

HAMMOND

(numbly)

That pizen powder you use, Doc...  
to kill old niggers cain't work  
no more. You got some?

REDFIELD

In my saddlebag.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

HAMMOND

Git it.

Redfield turns and goes to get the powder. Hammond looks at his father, his eyes savage and implacable. Maxwell nods gravely. Hammond hears Beatrice moaning and turns to look up, sees Lucrezia Borgia leading Beatrice, weeping dementedly, from Blanche's room.

HAMMOND

Lucrezia Borgia... take her to her room... an' git down here.

He turns and goes with Maxwell into the sitting room.

117 EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

117

Redfield walks to his horse, takes a bottle of white powder from his saddlebag, returns to the house.

118 INT. SITTING ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

118

Hammond and Maxwell are grilling Lucrezia Borgia who is sobbing hysterically.

MAXWELL

You knowin' 'bout this... an' sayin' nothin'?

LUCREZIA BORGIA

I not never mess in white folks' doin's. That white lady know whut she crave.

MAXWELL

Miz Blanche never crave that black ape.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Then whut fer she sen' fer him the secon' an' thir' time?

HAMMOND

(devastated)

It... ain't... true.

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Four days in all... while you away.

Redfield enters with the bottle.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND  
(to Lucrezia Borgia)

Git.

MAXWELL

An' you stay in the house...  
keep that jabberin' mouth of  
yourn shut.

Lucrezia Borgia leaves. Redfield places the bottle on a table and exits without a word. Hammond stares at the bottle, finally goes and picks it up. He opens it, then picks up a half-finished drink and pours the contents of the bottle into the glass. He raises the glass against the light, swirls it until the powder has dissolved. Maxwell stands watching grimly. Then Hammond starts out of the room, carrying the glass. As he passes his father, their eyes meet coldly -- in deadly agreement. Hammond is at the door -- when Maxwell has second thoughts.

MAXWELL

Lucrezia Borgia could be a-lyin',  
Ham. Mos' likely, it were rape,  
Ham... an' she askeared to tell.

Hammond shakes his head and leaves the room. Maxwell hesitates, then follows him from the room.

119 INT. STAIRWAY - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT 119

Hammond starts up the stairs to Blanche's room. Maxwell stands at the landing watching him ascend.

120 INT. BLANCHE'S ROOM - FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT 120

Blanche opens her eyes as Hammond enters. She looks at him terrified.

BLANCHE

(dreamily)

Miz Redfield done take the baby  
away.

She says it in a way that confuses the fact of the infant's removal with the magical hope that the night-marish birth had never happened. Hammond goes to her, supports her in a sitting position and gives her the glass. Her eyes flicker with surprise and hope.

HAMMOND

(evenly)

Drink this down... make you feel  
better.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

She sips the drink. Hammond watches impassively. But Blanche, interpreting Hammond's bringing her the glass as care and concern, gains courage to attempt an explanation.

BLANCHE

Hammond... Hammond... believe me... I didn't mean no harm... I only wanted... cause of you an' that Ellen... to...

HAMMOND

(cutting her off)

Drink the rest.

She obeys meekly. She finishes the drink, peers into the glass.

BLANCHE

What this white stuff in the bottom?

HAMMOND

Medicine. Doc Redfield say it'll make you sleep.

He eases her back on the pillows, takes the glass from her. She closes her eyes.

BLANCHE

Hammond...

HAMMOND

Later.

He looks at her for a moment, then leaves, closing the door behind him.

121 EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - NIGHT 121

Hammond, carrying a rifle, walks toward Lucy's cabin.

122 INT. LUCY'S CABIN - FALCONHURST PLANTATION - NIGHT 122

Mede, Big Pearl, Lucy and the baby lie asleep in the cabin. Hammond thrusts the door open.

HAMMOND

Mede!

The Mandingo snaps awake, leaps to his feet. He sees the relentlessness in Hammond's face and the gun in Hammond's hand -- and his eyes glaze. Big Pearl and Lucy wake up and the baby starts to cry.

(CONTINUED)



122 CONTINUED:

122

HAMMOND

The big kettle, fill it with water an' strike a fire under it. Lucy, you come, too.

Mede and Lucy -- both mystified and frightened -- leave the cabin, Hammond behind them.

123 EXT. FALCONHURST HOUSE - NIGHT

123

The cauldron stands in front of the house. It is supported by bricks, a blazing fire underneath. Mede arrives carrying two buckets of water -- Hammond walking vigilantly behind, rifle in hand. Mede, moving in a trance, pours the water into the cauldron which is now steaming, clouds of vapor rising into the night air. Lucy throws two more logs onto the fire. In the b.g., blacks are gathering to watch. Agamemnon appears, stands midway between the house and the cauldron.

HAMMOND

(to Lucy)

Keep totin' an' puttin' wood on. An' bring me the pitchfork from the stable.

He walks toward the house, keeping an eye on Mede all the while. Maxwell stands on the veranda.

HAMMOND

I crave you come see.

MAXWELL

I kin see good enough from here.

Hammond starts back toward the cauldron, stops and turns to make sure his father is still there. Along with his other motives, he is proving something to the old man.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Lucy arrives with the pitchfork, hands it to Hammond. Then Hammond looks at the seething water in the cauldron, turns to Mede.

HAMMOND

Git you in.

Mede, staring at the boiling water, makes no move to comply.

HAMMOND

Git in!

(CONTINUED)

MEDE

(softly)

You meanin' to kill me...

HAMMOND

I reckon you know why...

MEDE

Miz... Miz Blanche...?

HAMMOND

The sucker come... it was yourn.

MEDE

Masta Hammon!... you don't know,  
 cain't know whut happen. I  
 never craves to do anythin' agin  
 you. I alluz respect you. Miz  
 Blanche... she say she tell you  
 I rape her... iffn I don't do  
 whut she say...

HAMMOND

GODDAM, GIT IN THERE!

Mede shakes his head slowly.

MEDE

No. You expeck a nigger slave  
 to do anythin' you say -- git  
 up, lay down, fight 'n kill.  
 But some things -- come a  
 time -- even a nigger slave  
 ain't agoin' to do fer a  
 white man. You goin' to have  
 to do yo' own killin'...  
 (then, pointedly,  
 derisively)  
 Hammon... Masta Hammon!

Mede's eyes flash from side to side as though weighing  
 his chances of escape. Hammond puts the pitchfork on  
 the ground and levels the rifle at Mede.

HAMMOND

You try an' run, I'll put a  
 hole in yer back.

Mede looks at Hammond straight in the eyes, holding the  
 gaze, defiant, immovable.

MEDE

I done think you was somehow  
 better'n a white man. But  
 you is... a... white... man.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED - (2):

123

The contempt and hatred he injects into the word "white" are almost palpable. The two men stare into each other's eyes -- a desperate, tragic communication -- as though they both sense they are caught in a nightmare, a situation beyond any control that must lead inexorably, ritualistically to its fatal end.

Mede lunges forward with a terrible roar. Hammond FIRES the rifle, hitting Mede in the shoulder, toppling him into the cauldron. Mede screams with pain, tries to scramble out of the boiling water. But Hammond drops his gun, picks up the pitchfork and rams the pitchfork at Mede's head, pressing him back underwater.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED - (3):

123

Suddenly Agamemnon comes racing toward Hammond, tries to knock him away from the cauldron. Hammond side-steps, slams Agamemnon with the back of the pitchfork, knocking him to the ground, then swings the pitchfork back toward the cauldron, jamming it against Mede and holding him deep in the water. Hammond looks back at Agamemnon for an instant.

HAMMOND

You a goddam fool, Mem!

He looks back toward the cauldron. Mede's body floats in the water inert. Agamemnon, on his knees, lunges for the rifle on the ground, gets it, rises, trains it on Hammond.

MAXWELL (O.S.)

HAMMOND!

Hammond turns, sees Agamemnon pointing the rifle at him. Agamemnon seems uncertain, trembles, caught between rage and fear. Hammond takes a step toward Agamemnon, stops.

HAMMOND

Put that down, Mem.

Agamemnon retreats several steps, the gun wavering in his hands. Maxwell comes down from the veranda, walking toward Hammond and Agamemnon.

MAXWELL

(shouting)

YOU CRAZY NIGGER, YOU PUT THAT  
GUN DOWN... LOONY BLACK BASTID...!

Maxwell's voice electrifies Agamemnon. Wildly, he swings the rifle toward Maxwell and FIRES. Maxwell is hit, crashes to the ground. Agamemnon turns and runs, dropping the gun.

Hammond rushes to his father, kneels beside him. Maxwell is unconscious, close to death, his face and head bloody. Hammond takes his father's hand, stares at him aghast, lips parted, his expression a cry of grief and horror.

FADE OUT.

THE END