

SIDES – AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALES (AGE 11-15)

READ FOR “ABBY”

SCENE 1

BACKGROUND: The two youths haven't met before, but were sent to do the camp's chores together. Though hesitant, they rarely see people their own age and are curious about each other.

EXT. FREE BLACK COMMUNITY, SWAMP – DAWN

Will squats over a basin full of murky water, cleaning dishes with ABBY, who is about his age.

ABBY
What's your name?

WILL
Will.
(after a beat)
William.

ABBY
William sounds old. They call me
Abby, instead o' Abigail.

They clean in silence for a bit.

ABBY
Who's that man you with? He kin to
you?

WILL
He just a man.

ABBY
Just a man?

The girl scoops up soap bubbles from the top of the water and lays it on Will's head. Will wipes it off without saying a word, but splashes her with water a few moments later.

ABBY
That's cold, boy!

She laughs before flicking water in his direction, which prompts the first smile from Will in a long time.

ABBY
(smiling)
You stayin' here? You should stay
here.

Will's smile dissolves. His face shows he'd like to.

ABBY
Huh?

WILL
Nah.

ABBY
How come? Where you goin'?

Will doesn't answer, but he can feel Nate walk up behind him.

ABBY
(disappointed)
There ain't much other children
'round here.

WILL
I ain't children.

NATE
Ready?

SCENE 2

BACKGROUND: Abby and Nate have been traveling together for a day. Although Abby is supposed to eventually betray Nate, Abby is fascinated by Nate because he's different from anyone she's known before.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Abby, Nate, and Marcus lie in the cold, trying to sleep. Just as Nate closes his eyes...

ABBY
(to Nate)
You ever seen a canon shoot off?

No answer.

ABBY

I heard'em lots, just never
seen'em.

No comment from Nate, though the girl's conversation obviously grates on him. Just when it seems Abby's given up...

ABBY

Why you think--

NATE

Didn't your mama ever teach you
to shut up and listen sometime?

ABBY

(without self-pity)
I never knew my mama.

Nate's anger relents. After a bit, Abby resumes:

ABBY

How long it been since you run
off North?

NATE

I ain't a runaway.

This confuses Abby. She stops for a moment, and she becomes quiet as she considers the information.

ABBY

(to Nate)
What's it like diggin' for the
federals?

No answer.

ABBY

It don't seem no different from
diggin' for a master down South.

NATE

You seen me ask any man's
permission to leave?

Abby takes this in with great interest.

NATE

You work hard, you your own man.
I don't need no one, and don't
look out for no one.

ABBY

Marcus and I look out for each
other ever since the army burned
the farm... doin' what it takes
to get by.

Abby looks to Marcus, but receives no glimmer of
confirmation.

ABBY

We's family, you know?

NATE

I knew my ma for about two
hours, and my father was a son
of a bitch.

ABBY

My father went north two years
ago, but he's comin' back for
me.

MARCUS

(exasperated)

That's bull and you know it.
Comin' back south for you is the
last thing on that man's mind.

Abby tries not to show emotion.

Marcus rolls over and pulls the thin blanket tighter.

ABBY

(to Nate)

That ain't right, what he said.
