

## SISTERS

Written by: Young Lee

The writer and composer, Young Lee, studied art and film in college in Korea and later moved to Mississippi, driven by a deep longing for the American South. Over many years, he devoted himself to developing this screenplay. After a decade of unwavering dedication, he completed the screenplay for Sisters. As a Korean filmmaker, he takes great pride in this story and sees it as part of his life's mission – to help Mississippi and bridge the divide between Black and white communities.

If you're looking for something new, something heartfelt, something that dares to heal through story – then Sisters just might be what you're looking for.

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## SISTERS - Movie Synopsis

At the heart of Sisters lies the timeless mystery and divine power of the number three.

The universe, some say, is held together by three elements: Time, Space, and Matter. Though they appear separate, they are inseparably woven – three in one, much like the Trinity. This truth becomes the spiritual foundation of the film, explored through the tangled threads of racism, class division, and social struggle in Mississippi.

The story begins with three Southern girls – TIFFANY ROSE, SARAH, and Miriam – each 10 years old in 1964 Mississippi, the year the Civil Rights Act was signed.

- TIFFANY ROSE: A wealthy, white ballerina raised in luxury and silence.
- SARAH: A free-spirited artist from a modest, working-class background.
- Miriam: A gifted gospel singer, raised in poverty as a Black girl in the Deep South.

Though their paths never crossed in youth, fate brings them together in 2024, now aged 70, living under the same roof in a small-town Mississippi nursing home.

What begins as a simple card game under the magnolia tree becomes something more – a conversation, then a connection, and then a revelation. As they shuffle the deck and swap memories, the women begin to uncover striking parallels in their lives... hidden truths that suggest their stories have been intertwined all along.

Their initials – T, S, and M – mirror the very structure of the universe: Time, Space, and Matter.

But the mystery deepens.

Each woman has carried a strange, inexplicable gift through life, one she never fully understood:

- TIFFANY ROSE sees flashes of the future (Time).
- SARAH can teleport in places (Space).
- Miriam can pass through solid objects (Matter).

These gifts, wild and uncontrollable, have saved them in moments of danger – and isolated them in moments of need. Only now, sitting together, do they begin to understand the deeper meaning behind these powers.

As their friendship grows, they laugh, cry, and confront painful truths about race, loss, love, and legacy. But just when the women believe they've uncovered the full extent of their connection, one final revelation changes everything.

In a quiet moment of conversation, they realize each of them gave birth at different times and under different circumstances to a mixed-race son. At first, it's a beautiful coincidence, a symbol of unity rising from division.

But the story doesn't end there.

#### MOVIE CHARACTER LIST – SISTERS MAIN CHARACTERS Miriam

- Race: Black
- Age: 10 (flashbacks), Early 20s (flashbacks), 70s (present)
- Abilities: Can phase through solid matter
- Role: An elderly Black woman in a nursing home. She gave birth to her mixed-race son, Enoch. She is strong, spiritual, and deeply rooted in her past. She grew up near the Pearl River and lost her grandfather, Billy, in the flood. She carries generational trauma with quiet dignity and a deep connection to her family's land and faith.

#### Tiffany Rose Windsor

- Race: White
- Age: 10, 20s, 50s (flashbacks), 70s (present)
- Abilities: Prophetic visions of the future
- Role: An elderly white woman, elegant and refined, from a wealthy Southern family with ties to the Windsor Estate. She gave birth to her mixed-race son, Elijah. She is clairvoyant, able to see glimpses of the future. Despite her privileged background, she harbors emotional wounds from her past, including family secrets and regrets.

#### Sarah

- Race: White (middle class)
- Age: 10 (flashbacks), Early 20s (flashbacks), 70s (present)
- Abilities: Teleportation (supernaturally "blinks" through doors)

- Background: Former drug mule, survivor of rape and addiction
- Role: An elderly white woman in the nursing home. Kind-hearted, gentle, and deeply spiritual. She gave birth to her mixed-race son, Joshua, under mysterious and miraculous circumstances. She has experienced rejection, resilience, and redemption, and finds comfort in faith and the church.

#### SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Blind Billy : Black 80s Role: Miriam's grandfather; blind blues musician who dies in the flood.

Kiara : Black Age: 40s-50s (flashbacks) Role: Miriam's mother; strong-willed and protective.

Livvie Windsor : White 40s-50s (flashbacks) Role: TIFFANY ROSE's mother; mentally fragile.

John Windsor : White 40s-50s (flashbacks) Role: TIFFANY ROSE's father; wealthy landowner driven by ambition and pride.

George Black Late teens to 30s (past)Carpenter Role: Miriam's husband; builds their life with faith and hard work.

Enoch Biracial Infant (flashbacks), 10 (flashbacks) Abilities: Supernatural insight(implicit) Role: Miriam's son; future pastor and spiritual figure.

Elijah Biracial Infant (flashbacks), present age TBD Abilities: Supernatural insight (implicit) Role: Tiffany Rose's son; Harvard-educated, socially conscious.

Joshua Biracial Infant (flashbacks), present age TBD Abilities: Delayed miracles, healing powers Sarah's son; devout preacher.

Chris Ingle : Age 10 to 50 Role: TIFFANY ROSE's husband; deceitful banker and father of Elijah.

Butch: 20s Role: Vietnam vet turned drug dealer; exploits SARAH.

Betty: 50s Role: Sarah's mother.

Tom :50s Sarah's father Church elder or grandfather. Painter and farmer

The Man/ Mysterious Pastor

## SMALL ROLES

- Head Sister: 60s Leader of Sister's Home, caretaker.
- Nurse: 60s Assists during Elijah's birth.
- Mr. Benson: 60s Landlord who sells Canton names him.  
spiritual land to Miriam and George.
- Uncle Gary: 40s Abusive figure in Miriam's past.
- Boy Bush: Teen involved with Chris in flashbacks.
- Crystal: 30s John Windsor's secretary and mistress.
- Governor: 50s Political figure aligned with Windsor.
- Ms. Hutchinson: Teacher private tutor
- Factory Manager: Involved in oil business collapse.
- Boy 1 & 2 / Bully 1 & 2: 10s Flashback characters  
representing peer conflict.
- Football Player
- Carpenter:
- Doctor Mike: Attending doctor in key scenes.
- Elvis Presley:
- Little Ricky:
- George Bush's Father: Political reference.
- Senator / MS Senator: Political backdrop.
- Calanias the Magician: Mysterious, symbolic character

1G SISTERS

1 EXT. MISSISSIPPI COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A HUMMINGBIRD cuts through the thick, humid air above the winding Pearl River. Below, the white blooms of a sprawling cotton field stretch toward the horizon. In the distance, the domed rooftops of JACKSON shimmer beneath the southern sun. The hummingbird's wings buzz like a heartbeat as it glides through a sky painted in brilliant blue.

2 EXT. COTTON FIELD - DAY

The small bird darts over a stretch of cotton, which appears nearly ready for harvest. It resembles snow, if snow were baked under intense heat. The bird settles on a magnolia branch, searching for the last fragrant blossoms of the season.

3 EXT. NURSING HOME GARDEN - DAY

The sun hangs low in the sky but still radiates intense heat. A large oak tree spreads its branches wide over a wrought iron table where TIFFANY ROSE, SARAH, and MIRIAM sit, dressed in their finest hats, as if attending a formal event. The garden is quiet, except for the gentle rustling of Spanish moss and the hum of a focused little hummingbird, flitting from hat to hat as if choosing a favorite.

TIFFANY ROSE's hat is decorated with red roses. SARAH's is adorned with yellow daffodils swaying in the breeze. And

MIRIAM's is topped with vibrant blue daisies nestled in her curls.

TIFFANY ROSE

Well isn't he something? Look at that lil' hummingbird go. Reckon he thinks we're the flowerbed.

SARAH

They always know when it's time to head south. Don't need a clock, calendar, or preacher telling them anything.

MIRIAM

Wish I had that kind o' sense. I'da saved myself a whole heap of trouble over the years.

4       A FLOWER PETAL DRIFTS DOWN, LANDING RIGHT ON THE TABLE. SARAH  
5       BRUSHES IT OFF WITHOUT LOOKING, STILL FOCUSED ON HER CARDS.  
6       THE HUMMINGBIRD ZIPS OFF, STARTLED.

          TIFFANY ROSE

My goodness, this summer heat feels  
like it's burning straight through  
me. It's hotter than a billy goat  
in a pepper patch. Are you all  
feeling it, too?

          SARAH

(sipping her tea, nodding)  
Mmm-hmm. It sure hasn't been an  
easy season. I thank the good Lord  
for the evening breeze, whenever it  
decides to come around.

          MIRIAM

(shrugging like it isn't a  
big deal)  
Don't bother me none. I'll take  
heat over cold any day. Snow got no  
business down here – ain't never  
trusted it. That's why I never left  
Mississippi. No ma'am.

7       THE WOMEN LEAN IN, SHUFFLING CARDS, THE SOUND OF THEM  
8       SLAPPING TOGETHER LIKE OLD HYMNS.

          SARAH

So how long you been here, Tiffany  
Rose? At this... establishment.

          TIFFANY ROSE

(sitting up, chin lifted  
just a touch)  
Just a few weeks—I'm still settling  
in. But my family's been in  
Mississippi longer than most can  
remember. You might know my father  
— John Windsor?

          MIRIAM

(eyebrows shooting up)  
Windsor? You mean Windsor House,  
over in Jackson?

TIFFANY ROSE

(sighs, as if tired of  
saying it))

Yes, ma'am. I grew up in the  
Windsor House. It used to be the  
largest home in town--until it  
caught fire and burned completely  
to the ground.

MIRIAM

(lowers her eyes, tapping  
the table with her  
finger)

I know what it feel like to lose a  
home. Thank to someone... My folks  
had a little place out by the Pearl  
River in Ebenezer. Land went under  
when they dammed it up. Whole  
childhood sitting at the bottom of  
a reservoir now. We been in Canton  
ever since.

(pauses, then asks  
pointedly)

But what I wanna know is... how  
somebody like you end up in a  
public nursin' home?

TIFFANY ROSE

(jaw tightening, chin  
lifting just a touch))

That's a personal matter.

MIRIAM

(chuckling)

You ever heard this one on radio?  
Quickest way to end up a  
millionaire in horses...is to start  
out a billionaire.

TIFFANY ROSE

We didn't have horses! Well--not  
many, anyway...

SARAH

(gently, looking between  
them, trying to keep  
things light)

Wait a minute, what's your name?

MIRIAM

Miriam! That's me, sugar.



SARAH

(smiling, shaking her head)

Ohhh, Miriam... let's not go stirring things up now. We're finally starting to settle in just fine.

MIRIAM

(holding up her hands))

I ain't stirrin' nothin'. I just said what folks is thinkin'. I mean, come on now—she Windsor blood. Folks like that don't usually sit where we sittin'.

TIFFANY ROSE

(sets her cards down, firmly but not angry.))

My husband was a bank president. We had money. We had plans. But when that financial mess hit in 2008, that bank run, we lost it all. Every dime. He passed away this year. That good enough for you?

MIRIAM

(her face softens, filling with guilt)

I sure am sorry to hear that. My husband—he gone too. Passed last year.

SARAH

(giving a kind smile))

I'm Sarah, by the way. Been here close to a year now. If you ever need anything—or if something feels off—just say the word. I've got a good ear... and a side-eye sharp enough to stop a snake in its tracks.

(she leans in a little, voice dropping)

Now let me tell y'all something... There's something peculiar about this place once the sun goes down.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Figures in white gowns, drifting through the halls like a slow-moving fog. Every now and then, you'll hear a door creak open—real slow.

You peek out, and there's  
 not a soul to be seen. But it doesn't trouble me none. I just  
 pull up the covers and go right on  
 to sleep.

MIRIAM  
 (grinning, eyes sparkling)  
 You sayin' we got ghosts?

SARAH  
 (whispering playfully)  
 Maybe...

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (laughing, shaking her  
 head)  
 Oh, y'all can go on with that. I'm  
 not the least bit afraid of ghosts.  
 If something wanted to haunt me, it  
 would've done it long ago.

SARAH  
 I used to live up in Madison.  
 Clarkdell Road, right near the old  
 train line.

MIRIAM  
 (perks up)  
 Oh I know where that is! Off  
 Yandell, ain't it? Ain't that a  
 trip? We was damn near neighbors  
 all them years and didn't even know  
 it! And yet, somehow, we never did  
 run into each other—not at the  
 store, not at church, nothin'.

SARAH  
 Isn't that something!

They laugh again, and this time it feels different – like the  
 start of something. The hummingbird returns, buzzing around.

9 EXT. NURSING HOME GARDEN - LATER

The game is getting more intense. They lean in closer to the  
 table, fully focused.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (clapping once as she  
 smiles, pulling the cards  
 toward her.)  
 Well would you look at that – I  
 won!

Not bad for somebody who  
 always flunked math.

MIRIAM  
 Uh-uh, that ain't right. Somethin'  
 don't add up.

SARAH  
 (shaking her head)  
 Miriam's right – it don't add up.  
 No, wait – hold up – I'm bad at  
 math too, so maybe I'm wrong!

TIFFANY ROSE  
 Sorry, y'all...I still can't subtract  
 (softening, her voice a  
 little far  
 off now) Would you believe  
 – when I  
 was ten, they put me in remedial  
 math classes? I couldn't figure out  
 three minus one to save my life.

SARAH  
 (bursting out laughing)  
 Oh Lord, same here! My teacher used  
 to look at me like I'd done  
 something wrong just for being  
 confused.

MIRIAM  
 (chuckling, nodding)  
 Same here. I'd stare at those  
 numbers like they was written in  
 Chinese.

Thought somethin' was wrong with me for the longest time.

SARAH  
 (pointing at the two)  
 Now isn't that somethin'? All three  
 of us stuck on remedial math. 3-1

TIFFANY ROSE

(laughing, shaking her head)

And let me tell you - my tutor was not amused.

MIRIAM

(leaning in, curious)

Wait now... you had a private tutor? That fancy life, huh? What was she like?

TIFFANY ROSE

(sitting back, eyes far off)

Ms. Hutchinson. This was back in '64... right when everything was changing.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(idly shuffles the deck with her fingers moving slowly and speaks softly)

She was the scariest woman I ever met. Sharp as a tack, stiff as starch. Always smelled like peppermint and fresh ink. Made you feel small, like every wrong answer just proved her point.

SARAH

(smirking)

Sounds just like my third - grade teacher - Mrs. Jenkins. Had a ruler in her hand and no fear of usin' it.

MIRIAM

(laughing with a deep belly-laugh)

Shoot, mine had a ruler in one hand, Bible in the other, and a stare that could make a grown man confess!

TIFFANY ROSE

(grinning)

Oh, Ms. Hutchinson didn't need to use a ruler. Just one long sigh and you'd be melting in your seat.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)  
But I'll give her this — she never  
gave up on me.

JUMP CUT TO:

10 INT. TIFFANY ROSE'S CHILDHOOD HOME — DAY (1964)

The camera glides across a grand parlor adorned with lace curtains and polished wood. A young TIFFANY ROSE, ten years old, sits at a delicate writing desk. In the corner, an old grandfather clock ticks quietly, as if guarding secrets. The air is perfectly still.

11 TICK. TICK. TICK.

The antique clock in the corner swings its pendulum back and forth—slow, steady—as if it has all the time in the world. The atmosphere grows heavy, as though time itself is beginning to slow.

TIFFANY ROSE stands motionless at the center of the parlor, her face tilted upward, eyes glazed as if she's seeing something no one else can.

Suddenly, the hands of the antique clock begin to spin wildly. The sound of its ticking echoes through the high ceilings — tick... tick... tick... Then — BANG! A sharp crack breaks the silence as a ruler slaps down hard.

MS. HUTCHINSON  
(sharp and drawling)  
Tiffany Rose, sweetie, you need to  
bring your mind back to the  
present. What's three minus one?  
This is just basic first-grade  
arithmetic.

TIFFANY ROSE, startled, shakily writes a big zero. Her hands tremble, lips quivering.

MS. HUTCHINSON (CONT'D)  
(muttering, dismayed)  
Lord help me...

She presses her fingers to her temples, shaking her head as if the weight of it all has finally worn her down.

MS. HUTCHINSON (CONT'D)  
 (long sigh)  
 Alright then, let's take a short  
 pause. I need to have a word with  
 your mother and father.

She stands up and heads off. TIFFANY ROSE sits stiff as a  
 board, struggling to breathe. From the hall, hushed voices  
 drift back.

On the living room table sits a newspaper, "CIVIL RIGHTS ACT  
 SIGNED BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON"

MS. HUTCHINSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Mr. and Mrs. Windsor, I truly hate  
 to say this, but I'm quite  
 concerned about your daughter's  
 focus. She hasn't shown any  
 progress. You may want to consider  
 consulting a doctor about her  
 condition.

JUMP CUT TO:

12 EXT. NURSING HOME GARDEN - DAY

TIFFANY ROSE, now grown, sits in a rocker out back, fanning  
 herself. Her eyes unfocused as she looks off in the distance.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (softly, with a sad smile)  
 I still remember her saying that.  
 It made me feel like something was  
 wrong with me - like I was broken  
 somehow, not like the other girls.

She turns toward the other elderly ladies on the porch.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)  
 (gently, curious)  
 What was it like for you all, going  
 to public school? I never had the  
 chance - I was homeschooled me  
 whole life. I imagine it must've  
 been quite an experience, wasn't  
 it?

The question hangs in the air, prompting responses filled  
 with their own tales of school days long past, revealing more  
 about each woman's unique journey.

JUMP CUT TO:

13

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY (1964)

The room is warm and still, the sunlight barely filtering through the dusty blinds. The ceiling fan spins lazily, doing little more than stirring the faint scent of pencil shavings and old lunchboxes.

A wind chime near the open window gives a soft, delicate clink.

The suddenly...the breeze beings to rise - gentle at first, then steadily stronger until it whirls into a wild twist, like a miniature tornado spinning right there in the middle of the classroom.

SARAH feels it deep in her bones - like her whole body might lift off the ground and be carried straight out the window, drawn toward somewhere distant... some place the wind seems to know what she's meant to find.

She doesn't resist. Just closes her eyes and lets it take her. But the strange thing is - none of the other children seem to notice a thing.

TEACHER (O.S.)

Sarah Jean! Come on up here to the front, honey.

SARAH blinks back to reality, eyes wide. She scoots her chair back slow.

YOUNG SARAH

Uhhh... yes, ma'am.

She walks slowly up the aisle, eyes downcast. Then -SPLAT!- a wet spitball hits the back of her neck. She flinches, wipes it away, and hears quiet snickering from a boy behind her. But she doesn't say a word. She just keeps walking to the chalkboard, like it's nothing new.

TEACHER

Alright now, I want you to solve this problem for us.

The teacher writes on the board: 3 - 1. She then hands SARAH a piece of chalk. Her little hand shakes, SARAH nervously swallows, then writes 0 on the chalkboard. A brief moment of silence - then a rush of laughter from the kids in the back. Snorts, giggles, whispering. SARAH steps to the side with a red face, looking like she'd rather sink through the floor.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

(firmly, sharp)

Class. Class! That's plenty.

(MORE)

TEACHER (CONT'D)  
 Hush up now. Sarah, it's alright,  
 honey. Let's work through it  
 together, alright?

The teacher turns to SARAH and patiently holds up three fingers, then lowers one.

TEACHER (CONT'D)  
 (softer, coaxing)  
 Now look here, sweetie... how many  
 fingers do I still have up?

YOUNG SARAH  
 (blinks, thinking hard,  
 mouth barely moving)  
 I... I see two fingers.

TEACHER  
 (beaming)  
 That's right! Three take away one  
 is two. Good job, sweetie, now go  
 on and sit back down.

The TEACHER leads the class in applause as SARAH, slightly comforted but still embarrassed, returns to her seat.

14 INT. CANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY (1964)

The camera moves slow across a worn-down classroom. Wood floors creak under tired desks. Faded chalkboard scratched with old numbers. In the back, a rusty faucet leaks steadily. DRIP. DRIP. DRIP.

MIRIAM, Ten, brown-skinned with tight braids, sits at her desk staring off, eyes locked on that drip-drip-drip, like it's whispering to her. To her, it isn't just water. It's a tin bucket, filling up slowly...And in her mind, the water keeps rising. Rising past her ankles... her knees... her chest...The whole classroom's flooding. But nobody sees it. Only Miriam. And she's the only one sinking. The water now creeping up to her neck—

TEACHER (O.S.)  
 Miriam! Girl, you betta wake up an'  
 pay attention!

The TEACHER, a tall, heavysset Black woman in a stiff skirt suit, doesn't miss a beat. She struts over, ruler in hand.



15

SMACK!

She slams it down hard on Miriam's desk. Miriam jumps like she been caught stealing. Eyes wide. Breath caught in her throat.

TEACHER

(hard-eyed)

We doin' math now. I need you  
focused, y'hear me? What's three  
take away one?

The air feels hotter now. That drip still going. Walls feel like they closing in. Miriam swallows. Her throat dry. She opens her mouth

MIRIAM

(stammering and speaking  
so low, you'd miss it if  
you weren't listening)

Z-z-z-zero...

She writes it on the board, ever so gently – as if she's afraid the chalk might cry out. SMACK! The ruler strikes again – sharper, harsher. The room falls silent.

TEACHER

(voice low but sharp)

If you don't learn even this easy  
math, them white folks gon' keep  
callin' us "N" – like that supposed  
to mean we less than them.

(sighs – angry and tired)

Gimme your hand, Miriam.

Miriam doesn't move at first. But then she slowly lifts her small hand. Fingers curled.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

We gone over this time an' time  
again. You know better than that.

WHACK! WHACK! Two quick strikes. MIRIAM flinches – but doesn't cry. She just blinks, staring down at her smarting hand.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

(still firm, but with a  
softness creeping in)

The answer is two, baby. Not zero.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

You gotta stay wit' us. The world  
isn't gon' wait for a lil' Black  
girl to catch up.

Those words hit harder than the ruler. MIRIAM nods, lips  
pressed tight. But her eyes?

They drift back to the corner...

To that drip. The imaginary bucket still filling up.

JUMP CUT TO:

16

EXT. NURSING HOME GARDEN - DAY

MIRIAM, now in her seventies, leans back in her chair,  
speaking slow, her voice wearing the weight of time. TIFFANY  
ROSE and SARAH sit across from her, listening close. A warm  
breeze moves through the garden.

MIRIAM

(Thinking out loud)

You know... it weren't that I was  
embarrassed gettin' the answer  
wrong. Shoot, half the class got it  
wrong too. But Lord, that ruler  
stung somethin' awful. Still, I  
said "zero" 'cause it just felt  
right. And truth be told? It still  
does. I know the right answer's  
two, but somethin' 'bout it just  
never sat right with me.

TIFFANY ROSE and SARAH both nod, like a long-lost puzzle  
piece just clicked into place.

TIFFANY ROSE

(softly, with a little  
smile)

Me too... I always felt like it  
should be right, even when I knew  
it wasn't.

SARAH

(amused, then shifting to  
thoughtful)

Now here I am, grown and gray,  
still can't tell ya why I thought  
it was zero. I mean - plain as day  
- it's two.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Maybe I had something like ADD or whatever they call it now... but folks didn't talk about that back then.

MIRIAM takes a breath, eyes drifting out toward the field. The three women settle in, ready to peel back another layer of one another.

MIRIAM

(after a beat, softly)

I swear... I ain't never met another soul who thought like I did 'bout that problem. Feels like some kinda strange little miracle.

TIFFANY ROSE

(softly)

I have tell you two something. A secret. Well... a secret power, really. She hesitates, tongue tracing her bottom lip, then smiles—half sheepish, half scared.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)

I ain't never told a soul. Not even Mama. I didn't wanna be seen as... different. Or worse, crazy. But... I reckon now's the time. I—I already knew what y'all were holding last round. That's why I won. I can see the future. Just... little flashes of it. Like lightning in a jar.

She leans back slowly, eyes dropping to her lap.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)

I promise I won't cheat again. Not in this game, anyhow. SARAH(brows furrowed)Hold up. You sayin' you knew I was gonna lay down them two queens? That you knew what cards I had... before I played? TIFFANY ROSE(nods, shy)It was plain as day. Saw it before it had even happened.

MIRIAM

(snorts, arms crossed)

She's just teasin'. That ain't possible. Girl, this ain't no fairy tale.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
 Alright then—let's test it.  
 (shuffles the deck, slides a card  
 face-down)  
 I'm pickin' a card. What is it?

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (closes her eyes, murmurs)  
 Ace. Ace of red diamonds.

MIRIAM  
 (leaning in, suspicious)  
 Now how in the world...  
 (flips the card)  
 ...Lord have mercy.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (sits up a little  
 straighter, voice quiet  
 but firm)  
 It is possible. 'Cause I lived it.  
 Lived with it.

She chuckles, the sound tinged with both fondness and sorrow.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)  
 I remember the first time it  
 happened. I was ten. It happened at  
 one of the Windsor House parties.

JUMP CUT TO:

17      TIFFANY ROSE: FALL 1964 INT. WINDSOR HOUSE - GRAND DINING HALL  
 - NIGHT

The camera glides across the opulent dining hall, bathed in golden light and adorned with gleaming silver. Every detail is pristine, every surface polished to perfection.

In the corner, a string quartet gently tunes their instruments, their soft notes floating through the air.

The chandeliers overhead cast a warm, honeyed glow, wrapping the room in quiet elegance.

TIFFANY ROSE, around ten years old, tugs gently at the hem of her dress, trying to keep still under the hawk-eyed gaze of her mama, LIVVIE WINDSOR — a woman with steel in her spine and pearls round her neck.

LIVVIE WINDSOR

(to the maid, voice crisp  
and composed)

Sissy, you know better than that.  
The dinner knife, salad knife, and  
soup spoon all belong on the  
right—and the knife blades should  
always face the plate. Forks go on  
the left, with the salad fork  
placed farthest out.

MAID

(nervously)

Yes ma'am. I'll fix it right quick.

JOHN WINDSOR, TIFFANY ROSE's daddy, breezes in with that easy  
grin of his and plants a kiss on LIVVIE's cheek.

JOHN WINDSOR

Good evening, darling. How's it all  
coming along?

LIVVIE WINDSOR

(glancing toward the  
dining table, then at  
TIFFANY ROSE's bow)

Hi, everything's going just fine...  
(pauses, then speaks)

TIFFANY ROSE, sweetheart, that red  
ribbon simply won't do. Go on and  
change it — it doesn't match at all  
with the white linen we've set out.

TIFFANY ROSE nods, obedient and polite, and heads upstairs.  
Livvie watches her with that tight-lipped.

JOHN WINDSOR

(touching her back gently)

Thank you, darling, for always  
making these gatherings feel so  
special.

LIVVIE WINDSOR

(smiling, soft but proud)

Oh, you know I live for this. These  
nights? They're in my blood.(pauses  
in thought, then speaks)Tell me,  
will the governor be joining us  
this evening?

JOHN WINDSOR

I did extend the invitation, but he  
may be tied up.

(MORE)

JOHN WINDSOR (CONT'D)

We'll have a few senators  
attending, along with some  
prominent folks from the bank.

The doorbell rings and in an instant the house stirs to life. Maids glide through the halls, glasses clink in anticipation, and LIVVIE rises with quiet grace, her posture regal, every inch the hostess.

LIVVIE WINDSOR

(to John, then calling  
down the hall)

Come stand by me now. TIFFANY ROSE,  
get over here and mind your  
posture, sweetheart!

Guests begin to stream in—men in dark suits, ladies in gloves and perfume. LIVVIE glides forward.

LIVVIE WINDSOR (CONT'D)

Senator Stennis! We're absolutely  
delighted you could join us.  
Please, come in.

SENATOR STENNIS

(grinning with  
familiarity)

Now Livvie, just call me Bob.  
You're all looking wonderful this  
evening.

And this house — it's truly something special.

The party swells with polite laughter, slow-drawled stories, and the kind of talk that holds weight behind closed doors. TIFFANY ROSE hangs close by her daddy as he chats with ROBERT INGLE, a sharp-looking man in a tailored suit.

ROBERT INGLE

(extending his hand)

John, Robert Ingle — new president  
over at the Bank of Mississippi.

JOHN WINDSOR

(shaking his hand firmly)

It's a real pleasure to meet you,  
Robert.

Next time, be sure to

bring your wife and children. We should have all those  
renovations

out front finished by then. Have

you seen the mess?

ROBERT INGLE

I did. Still, this place is just stunning. Real honor to be here tonight.

JOHN WINDSOR

Cotton's been lagging a bit lately, what with all the polyester on the rise but Windsor still leads the state, holding strong.

ROBERT INGLE

Surely indeed!

JOHN turns to LIVVIE and nods toward TIFFANY ROSE.

JOHN WINDSOR

Why don't you take TIFFANY ROSE and keep the ladies company while I give Robert a quick tour?

LIVVIE responds with the warm, graceful smile she's known for, gently linking her arm through TIFFANY ROSE's.

LIVVIE WINDSOR

Come along, sweetheart. Let's be sure all our guests are feeling truly welcome.

TIFFANY ROSE moves with quiet grace, handing out smiles and napkins like she was born hostessing. ROBERT INGLE watches her for a moment, impressed.

ROBERT INGLE

(to John)

Your daughter's a real Southern belle. Carries herself like a lady twice her age.

TIFFANY ROSE, floating through the crowd, is already learning how the game is played.

18

INT. WINDSOR HOUSE - DINING HALL - EVENING

The dining hall hums with quiet elegance—crystal glasses clinking, soft laughter rising and falling, and the air thick with perfume and polite conversation. TIFFANY ROSE stands near her mother, LIVVIE WINDSOR, greeting guests with the practiced grace expected of a Windsor.

LIVVIE, radiant and poised in full hostess mode, is momentarily caught off guard when CRYSTAL, her husband's secretary, steps through the doorway—uninvited and all smiles.

LIVVIE WINDSOR  
(startled, but regains her  
composure)  
Well, CRYSTAL! My goodness—what a  
surprise. What brings you by this  
evening?

CRYSTAL  
(grinning brightly)  
Oh! Mr. Windsor — John — asked me  
to drop by. Said we had a few  
business matters to wrap up. That  
man never lets the ink dry before  
moving on to the next thing, you  
know?

LIVVIE blinks a moment longer than what's considered polite,  
then smooths her face into a gracious smile.

LIVVIE WINDSOR  
(stepping aside)  
Well now, don't just stand there,  
dear — come on in. That white dress  
is striking. I'd swear I've seen it  
somewhere before.

CRYSTAL  
(blushing slightly)  
Oh, thank you, ma'am. My boyfriend  
picked it out. Couldn't rightly say  
where from.

Ever the consummate hostess, LIVVIE gestures to TIFFANY ROSE,  
who stands quietly beside her.

LIVVIE WINDSOR  
Have you met our daughter? TIFFANY  
ROSE, this is Miss Crystal.  
Crystal, this is our pride and joy.

TIFFANY ROSE offers a graceful curtsy, just as she's been  
taught.

CRYSTAL  
(smiling warmly)  
Well, aren't you just a picture of  
grace. Your daddy says you're quite  
the little ballerina.



TIFFANY ROSE  
 (politely, shyly)  
 I'm learning, ma'am. Thank you.

CRYSTAL  
 (to Livvie)  
 She must take after you — both of  
 you carry yourselves like dancers.  
 Just lovely.

Just then, JOHN WINDSOR enters with ROBERT INGLE, the new  
 bank president. His smile falters slightly when he sees

19 CRYSTAL.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 (raising his eyebrows)  
 CRYSTAL? What are you doing here  
 tonight?

CRYSTAL  
 (laughing lightly)  
 You don't remember? You told me to  
 stop by, said we had some business  
 to finish up. Thought it'd be  
 alright to swing through.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 (chuckling, scratching his  
 head)  
 Lord, I must be losing it. What  
 would I do without you? Thank you  
 for coming. Go on and enjoy the  
 evening — we'll talk shop later.

LIVVIE, ever poised, takes the moment in stride and turns to  
 a nearby servant with a warm but unmistakable authority.

LIVVIE WINDSOR  
 (gently, with composed  
 authority)  
 Would you be so kind as to set an  
 additional place for Miss CRYSTAL?  
 It won't take but a moment.

As guests begin settling into their seats, an elegant spread  
 is unveiled—roast duck glazed to perfection, golden cornbread  
 dressing, and butter beans heaped high. The silver glints  
 beneath soft candlelight, and compliments float across the  
 table like whispers in a Sunday pew.

JOHN WINDSOR, mid-conversation, glances across the table—and pauses. CRYSTAL is staring at him. A flicker of unease crosses his face, gone almost as quickly as it appeared.

A red-faced SENATOR, older and confident, leans in toward LIVVIE, his napkin tucked into his collar like he's readying for battle.

SENATOR

LIVVIE, you always find the finest help and serve the best supper in the state. Shame the rest of the country's turned soft — folks expecting handouts at every turn.

CRYSTAL, uninvited, speaks from across the table — clearly not the one being addressed.

CRYSTAL

It's just real sad what happened to President Kennedy last year. Felt like we lost more than just a man.

The table falls still. Utensils pause. The SENATOR clears his throat, clearly not expecting her to speak.

SENATOR

(chuckling awkwardly)  
Well now, I appreciate the sentiment, Miss... but maybe let's not bring politics to the supper table. Never pairs well with dessert.

Before the mood can shift further, LIVVIE steps in smoothly to avert the awkward situation — as graceful as ever.

LIVVIE WINDSOR

Now, now — let's not let things get too heated. We've something delightful planned after dinner. I've hired a magician who claims he can hypnotize just about anyone—and says he's from the future, if you can imagine such a thing!

A ripple of laughter and curiosity moves through the room. Raised brows, murmurs of amusement, and lighthearted chatter follow as dessert plates arrive.

The evening regains its rhythm, charm restored. But beneath the clinking spoons and embroidered linens... something quieter stirs. Something no one's quite ready to name.

20

## INT. ENTERTAINMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The Windsor House's entertaining parlor is dressed to impress—wide space, warm lamplight glowing, and velvet chairs lined up neat as church pews facing a small stage. Center stage, a big ol' clock is covered in deep blue velvet. The room hums with soft chatter and clinks of ice in highball glasses.

TIFFANY ROSE, sitting tall and proper in her pale blue dress, finds her seat near the front beside her mama, LIVVIE, and a couple close family friends. The big oak door creaks open, and in slips CRYSTAL, looking around like she's not sure if she belongs — but she finds a seat right next to JOHN, who stiffens just a hair.

On the stage, a man in the wildest outfit anyone in Mississippi's ever laid eyes on steps forward — shiny boots, slick hair, and a suit that don't look like it came from any store in Jackson.

CALANIAS

(loud, smooth, and  
theatrical)

Ladies and gentlemen—good evening.  
The name's Calanias, and I've come  
to you... from the future.

He sweeps his arms wide and whips the cloth from the clock in a grand flourish. Instead of a cuckoo, a real, live bird bursts out, fluttering around the room as if it knows every corner. Gasps echo through the hall, followed by laughter and applause, as the bird circles once and lands neatly in Calanias' hand — like it's done this a hundred times before.

CALANIAS (CONT'D)

(grinning)

Now, tonight, your understanding of  
time... space... and matter? Well,  
let's just say it's about to get a  
little scrambled.

He steps forward, closer to the edge of the stage, voice dropping to a magnetic hush.

CALANIAS (CONT'D)

If you're wearing a watch, go ahead  
and take a look. Because with this  
very clock behind me — I'm about to  
change the time of day, right  
before your eyes.

The room stirs—guests glancing at their wrists, whispering, comparing times. The air hums with anticipation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1  
 Mine says 7:11!

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2  
 Shoot, mine's sayin' 7:05!

CALANIAS  
 (smirks, zeroes in on the  
 second voice)  
 Well sir, you might wanna save up  
 for a Rolex.

The crowd chuckles, a few folks nudging each other.

CALANIAS (CONT'D)  
 (dramatically, pulling a  
 gold pocket watch on a  
 chain)  
 Now... I need me a brave soul.  
 Someone willing to take a lil'  
 stroll with me through time.

A SENATOR, proud as a peacock, shoots his hand up. He's half  
 showman himself. The crowd laughs and claps as he makes his  
 way onstage.

CALANIAS (CONT'D)  
 (Quieting the crowd with  
 one raised hand)  
 Alright now, hush just a minute.  
 Let's begin.

The Magician swings his stopwatch in a slow, rhythmic motion.  
 The lights dim just a bit. A gentle swirling mist starts  
 spilling out over the stage floor. The SENATOR's eyes become  
 unfocused. His hands go limp at his sides. His head droops  
 slightly.

21 INT. ENTERTAINMENT ROOM - NIGHT

TIFFANY ROSE is sitting in the audience watching the magician  
 work on the Senator.

Her eyes blink slowly. The lights start to swim, the ticking  
 gets slower... then faster. The stage stretches and shrinks,  
 like she's lookin' through a funhouse mirror. Everything  
 warps. Her breath catches. The world doesn't feel right. And  
 then — a flash. A flicker of something that feels too  
 familiar.

A VISION. A soft veil pulls back. CRYSTAL leans down toward  
 her.

CRYSTAL  
 (whispering, polite but  
 hurried)  
 TIFFANY ROSE, honey, where's your  
 restroom?

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (Softly, still dazed,  
 pointing)  
 Down the hall... first door on the  
 left.

CRYSTAL gives a tight smile, nods, and slips out quiet as a breeze.

Moments later, TIFFANY ROSE watches her father, JOHN WINDSOR, rise quietly from his seat, adjusting his jacket with practiced ease. He follows after, head bowed slightly, doing his best not to draw attention. But LIVVIE, her mother, sees him. She doesn't speak. Doesn't move. She simply clenches her jaw, eyes fixed ahead, lips pressed tight. But her eyes burn with a quiet storm of hurt and heat.

The vision bends again. Time folds. The hall comes into view — fuzzy at first, then sharp. JOHN catches up to CRYSTAL.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 (whispering, low and firm)  
 What the devil are you doing here,  
 Crystal? I told you this isn't  
 safe.

CRYSTAL  
 (voice breaking, eyes  
 shiny)  
 I missed you. I just... I couldn't  
 stay away, John. You know good and  
 well how much I love you.

22 INT. ENTERTAINMENT ROOM - NIGHT

CALANIAS  
 (low and steady)  
 Can you hear me, sir?

SENATOR  
 (Murmuring)  
 I hear ya...

CALANIAS  
 Raise your right hand.

The senator's right hand floats up like it's being pulled by a string.

CALANIAS (CONT'D)

Now your left.

Up it goes. The room is dead silent, not even an ice cube shifting in a glass.

CALANIAS (CONT'D)

We going to take a little trip now.  
Fifty years ahead. Tell me what you see.

SENATOR

(voice slow, like he's  
talking in his sleep)  
I see folks... walking. But they  
aren't looking up. They are all  
staring at something in their  
hands.

CALANIAS

(fascinated)  
What are they holding?

SENATOR

Small... flat boxes. They tap them  
with both hands. Then walk again.  
Like they're in a trance.

CALANIAS

Do you see flying cars?

SENATOR

(shakes his head, still  
out of it)  
No... just all kinds. Little ones...  
big trucks. But not flying.

CALANIAS

Where you standing now?

SENATOR

In front of the Mayflower Café.

CALANIAS

And what does it look like?

SENATOR

Downtown Jackson... looks like a war  
zone. It's run-down. Real bad.

CALANIAS waves a hand—the mist fades. He snaps his fingers. The senator blinks, straightens up, and looks around, confused.

CALANIAS  
(Grinning)  
And just like that—we're back in  
the here and now.

23 INT. ENTERTAINMENT ROOM - NIGHT

CALANIAS rings a small silver bell on stage — DING-A-LING! The mist fades. Folks blink, stirring like they just woke up from a Sunday nap.

CALANIAS  
(laughing, warm)  
Well now! Welcome back, Senator —  
from the future, no less! Tell us,  
how long you reckon you were under?

SENATOR  
(grinning, proud)  
Oh, shoot... I'd say about two hours,  
give or take.

The room erupts with laughter.

AUDIENCE MEMBER  
(calling out)  
Senator, it's barely been fifteen  
minutes!

CALANIAS  
(grinning wide)  
Is that so? Well now, y'all better  
check them watches.

People start glancing at their wrists, then at each other. Murmurs spread like wildfire across the room.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2  
(gasping)  
Lord have mercy—it's 9:11?!

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3  
No way! That can't be right — we've  
been sitting here two hours?

Applause breaks out then turned into a standing ovation. Hats get tipped, fans flap open, and even the more dignified guests gasp and murmur in disbelief, some unable to contain their astonishment.

CALANIAS  
 (bows, hand over his  
 heart)  
 Thank y'all kindly. And let's give  
 a big hand to the good SENATOR for  
 going along with it!

Everyone claps as the SENATOR makes his way back to his seat, beaming like a pageant winner. CALANIAS turns back to the stage, gearing up for his next trick when suddenly...

CRYSTAL leans in close to TIFFANY ROSE, her voice low and polite.

CRYSTAL  
 Sugar, would you mind pointing me  
 toward the restroom?

TIFFANY ROSE goes stiff. Her breath catches. Her eyes widen. This is it—the moment she already saw. Her hands tremble as she slowly lifts one finger.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (barely above a whisper)  
 Down the hall... first door on the  
 left.

CRYSTAL  
 (sweetly)  
 Thank you, darlin'.

She rises and glides out, quiet and weightless—gentle as a ghost slipping through a dream.

TIFFANY ROSE watches, heart thudding in her chest. A second later — JOHN WINDSOR stands, clears his throat, and heads out in the same direction, not lookin' at nobody.

LIVVIE sits perfectly poised, as still and delicate as a porcelain doll. She says nothing. But beneath the surface, her hand begins to twitch — subtly, anxiously — fingertips worrying at her cuticle, as if trying to pluck a hidden thorn from beneath her skin.

JUMP CUT TO:

24

EXT. NURSING HOME GARDEN - DAY

TIFFANY ROSE blinks, blinks, as if surfacing from a deep memory. She's back at the table, holding her cards. Across from her, SARAH leans in, eyes sharp with curiosity.



SARAH

(soft, drawling)

Well now – how'd it happen? When did you first realize you had... you know... that little gift of yours?

TIFFANY ROSE

(startled, shifting in her seat)

Oh... that's quite personal. Not something I usually talk about.

(exhales slowly)

But... I suppose it all began when I was about ten years old.

MIRIAM leans in, her eyes wide with curiosity. She rests her elbows on the table, fully drawn in.

MIRIAM

So it's true? That magician fella really made all those watches jump ahead two whole hours?

TIFFANY ROSE

(chuckling, nodding)

He most certainly did. Had folks fanning themselves as if they'd seen something downright otherworldly. Bless their hearts.

She leans back with a subtle, knowing smile.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)

But as for how he did it... well, I'll share that little secret next time we play.

MIRIAM

(grinning, shaking her head)

Mmmhmm... rich folks and their secrets. Always keeping dessert locked up 'til the end.

They all laugh softly, cards shifting in hand.

TIFFANY ROSE

(placing a card down, eyes on SARAH)

And what about you, Sarah? Are there any stories you've kept tucked away – waiting for the right moment to be told?

SARAH  
 (quickly, but a bit shy)  
 Oh, I'm not so sure... my life wasn't  
 anything all that special.

She offers a soft smile, eyes dropping to her cards.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 Maybe I'll share something later...  
 but I'd truly love to hear more  
 about life in that grand old  
 Windsor House.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (Smirking, leaning back  
 with a twinkle in her  
 eye)  
 Well, Mama always said she had an  
 eye for beauty – could turn a broom  
 closet into a showroom if she put  
 her mind to it.

She pauses, then her eyes light up with excitement.

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)  
 Oh! I have to tell y'all about the  
 time I saved a boy's life.

JUMP CUT TO:

25 INT. WINDSOR HOUSE - DAY

LIVVIE WINDSOR, firm and particular, stands near the entry  
 with TOM, a seasoned house painter and farmer in his fifties.  
 She points out colors like she's orchestrating a symphony.  
 JOHN WINDSOR leans against the wall, looking mildly  
 overwhelmed, and TIFFANY ROSE stands nearby, watching it all.

LIVVIE  
 Now Tom, every room in this house  
 ought to speak with its own voice.  
 The formal living room will be  
 Oyster White – and that's from  
 Sears, nowhere else. The dining  
 room? Colonial Blue. The kitchen –  
 Sunshine Yellow. And my baby girl's  
 room? Cherry Pink, of course.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 But Mama... could I maybe have red  
 instead? I don't really like pink  
 all that much.

LIVVIE  
 (pulling tight smile)  
 Pink's just red with manners,  
 TIFFANY ROSE. You'll stick with  
 Cherry Pink.

TOM looks a little lost as he scratches his head and jots down notes.

PAINTER (TOM)  
 Y-Yes ma'am.

LIVVIE hands him a paper roll near as long as her arm. JOHN lets out a deep sigh.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 Livvie, you certain about all this?  
 Twenty-four rooms, twenty-four  
 colors?

LIVVIE  
 TOM can handle it. Isn't that  
 right, Tom?

PAINTER (TOM)  
 Yes'm. Any color you want, I'll get  
 it done.

JOHN turns to TIFFANY ROSE with a little grin.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 Alright, sweetheart. Let your mama  
 tend to her paint rainbow. You and  
 I - let's step outside and check on  
 the garden.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 Yes, Daddy.

JOHN gently takes TIFFANY ROSE's hand and leads her toward the front door.

LIVVIE  
 (calling after him)  
 Alright, honey, while you're out  
 there, have a look at the workers,  
 too.

Make sure they're not  
 standing around chatting more than  
 they're working.

26 EXT. WINDSOR HOUSE - DAY

TIFFANY ROSE steps out the front door alongside her father,

27 JOHN WINDSOR.

Together, they make their way into the yard, eyes drawn to the flurry of activity unfolding before them. The air is thick with sawdust and sun, the sharp rhythm of hammers ringing out in steady intervals.

Out front, carpenters move with practiced precision, erecting tall scaffolding around the grand facade. They're preparing to install another row of towering Corinthian columns—massive white pillars resting on brick-set plinths, each rising ten feet before stretching another forty toward the sky. At the top, the ornate carvings twist and curl like something from the ancient Greek temples Livvie admires so dearly.

Stone masons, bricklayers, and carpenters—mostly Black men in overalls and sweat-dampened shirts—move in seamless rhythm, like a well-rehearsed church choir, each man playing his part in the structure's rising hymn.

TIFFANY ROSE lifts her eyes to the sky. Something catches her attention—a hummingbird, darting with elegance through the heavy afternoon light, weaving between golden shafts of sun like it belongs there. She watches, head gently tilted — and then, without warning, a vision floods over her.

IN HER VISION:

JOHN WINDSOR

(calling up)

Please do be careful up there,  
won't you?

WORKER

(shouting down, smiling)

Don'tchu worry, Mr. Windsor! We do  
this all the time!

Suddenly—SNAP! A rope comes loose. The scaffold groans — CRACK! — and one whole side comes crashing down. Two men manage to grab on tight, holding fast—but a young Black boy, maybe fifteen, plummets, screaming as he hits the ground—head-first. Blood soaks the dirt. JOHN WINDSOR and the workers rush over, crowding around the boy.

JOHN WINDSOR

(panicked)

Get him to the hospital—now! Is he  
breathing?

WORKER #1  
 (checking the boy's neck)  
 He ain't breathin', Mr. Windsor...  
 Lord have mercy...

BACK TO REALITY:

TIFFANY ROSE gasps, her eyes snapping back to the present.  
 She looks up and sees the same young boy from her vision,  
 already climbing up the scaffold. She grabs her father's arm.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 Daddy... you said we were going to  
 work on my playhouse too, remember?

JOHN WINDSOR  
 Of course, sweetheart. We'll get to  
 it soon.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (pointing at the boy)  
 Can... can that boy help with it? The  
 one climbing up?

JOHN follows her finger, confused.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 That one up there?  
 (calls up)  
 You there — boy! Come on down here.  
 I've got something else that needs  
 tending to.

The boy doesn't hear him at first. Another worker turns and  
 hollers up.

OLDER WORKER  
 Hey, George! Git down here, boy!  
 Mr. Windsor callin' for ya!

GEORGE, startled, hesitates for a moment before making his  
 way down quickly. He jogs over and stands tall in front of  
 John, nervous but respectful.

GEORGE  
 Yessuh! What can I do for ya, sir?

JOHN WINDSOR  
 Think you can help my daughter with  
 her playhouse out back?

GEORGE  
 (grinning a bit)  
 Yessuh! I'd be proud to.

TIFFANY ROSE gives him a small smile and gestures for him to follow. He grabs his tools and walks with her. As they walk off, she hears it again—

JOHN WINDSOR  
(shouting)  
Y'all be careful up there now!

WORKERS  
(calling back, laughing)  
Yessuh, Mr. Windsor! We do this all the time!

TIFFANY ROSE freezes, her breath catching. She turns just in time to see it — SNAP! The scaffolding crashes down—just like in her vision. Men shout, wood splinters, ropes whip through the air. Two workers dangle, holding on. Others scramble to help. TIFFANY ROSE and GEORGE stop dead in their tracks, eyes wide, staring in stunned silence.

JOHN WINDSOR  
(rushing up)  
Good Lord... What happened?!

WORKER  
(checking the ropes)  
One o' them knots musta come loose, sir.

JOHN WINDSOR  
(relieved but firm)  
I told you to double-check those knots. We're not burying anyone today — am I understood?

WORKERS  
Yessuh!

GEORGE turns to TIFFANY ROSE, his voice trembling but grateful.

GEORGE  
Thank you, miss! I mean it. I mighta died up there if you ain't said nothin'. My name's George.

TIFFANY ROSE  
(gives a shy smile)  
You're welcome, George. I'm real glad you're okay.

JOHN WINDSOR watches from behind, quiet. He isn't the superstitious type — but he knows what he just saw.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 TIFFANY ROSE, you might've saved  
 that boy's life! I'm glad you  
 brought him down, dear, that was a  
 fortunate coincidence.

JUMP CUT TO:

28 EXT. NURSING HOME GARDEN - DAY

The three women sit gathered around a small wrought-iron table beneath the broad shade of an old magnolia tree. At the center, a pitcher of sweet iced tea beads with condensation. The air hangs still-thick with heat, and heavier still with memory.

SARAH  
 (shaking her head, slowly)  
 Well I'll be... that's one heck of a  
 story, girl.

MIRIAM sinks back in her seat, eyes wide-like everything's finally clicking into place.

MIRIAM  
 Whew! You mighta saved my husband's  
 life and not even known it.  
 (glances at TIFFANY ROSE)  
 You remember that boy's name?

TIFFANY ROSE  
 (shaking her head gentle)  
 Mmm-mm. No, ma'am. I was just a  
 little girl-I don't suppose I ever  
 really knew it at the time.

MIRIAM  
 Well... my man, he was a carpenter  
 all his life. Smelled like sawdust  
 and turpentine no matter how much  
 he washed. If he was still here,  
 I'd ask if he ever worked out at  
 that big ol' Windsor House.  
 (pauses, her voice gets  
 really soft)

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
 I miss that man something terrible.  
 Been almost a year now. He was only  
 seventy-five... too young to be  
 leaving this world.

She straightens up, eyes drifting to the glass in front of her. A shift happens. Something's coming...

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Now... since you shared your secret,  
TIFFANY ROSE... I reckon it's time I  
showed y'all mine.

She picks up her water glass.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Y'all see this ice right here?

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(quiet, but sure)  
Had this since I was lil'. Didn't  
know what to make of it. Thought I  
was cursed or cracked or somethin'.  
Used to scare me bad.

She gently presses her fingers to the glass.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

But now? I'm not scared anymore.  
Her hand slides smooth through the  
side of the glass like it was made  
of air.

She plucks out an ice cube and holds it up. It catches the sun and sparkles like magic.

TIFFANY ROSE & SARAH

(gasping, sitting up  
straight)  
Lord have mercy...

TIFFANY ROSE

That's not some parlor trick... is  
it?

MIRIAM

Naw, sugar. This real. I can pass  
through matter. Been able to since  
I was knee-high.

SARAH

(eyes big)  
You mean walls and stuff?

MIRIAM

(nodding, calm as ever)  
Mhm. Ain't nothin' solid if I don't  
want it to be.



TIFFANY ROSE  
 (leans in, voice hushed)  
 Well I'll be... When'd you first  
 know you had it?

Miriam looks down at the ice like she's reading her own story  
 in it. The smile fades. Eyes soften.

MIRIAM  
 Whew... that's somethin' I ain't told  
 nobody 'til now. But I reckon y'all  
 ready to hear it.

She pauses. Stills. A breeze stirs the leaves above them.  
 Then...

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
 Oh... Yes! I remember now I also  
 savin' one boy.  
 (turns to look at TIFFANY  
 ROSE)  
 Like you, TIFFANY ROSE. Don't know  
 who he was or why he was even  
 there... but I pulled him outta a ban  
 fire.

TIFFANY ROSE & SARAH  
 (in unison, leaning  
 forward overlapping  
 voices)  
 What?! Lawd, what happened??

MIRIAM  
 (her voice drops low, eyes  
 misting)  
 It's somethin' I don't go diggin'  
 up too often. Hurts too much. Took  
 years to come out the other side of  
 that.  
 (she breathes deep, then  
 lets it go)

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
 We had nothin' growin' up. No  
 lights, no fans... just the Lord and  
 the land. Our shack sat right by  
 the Pearl River. I used to watch  
 the fog hang over that water every  
 mornin'. By lunchtime it'd lift,  
 then sure as clockwork, the rain  
 would come.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(she smiles, soft like  
memory drifting in on a  
breeze)

Me and Momma stayed near my  
granddaddy. He was blind, but he  
heard everything. I'd come out the  
door and hear him on that guitar,  
or blowin' sweet on his harmonica.  
Blues just poured outta him like he  
was born with it in his bones.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(she chuckles once,  
bittersweet)

Momma, now, she didn't take no  
mess. Tough as a hickory switch.  
Worked her fingers to the bone  
raisin' me right. But she wasn't  
just raisin' me—she was fightin'.  
Standin' tall when standin' could  
get you knocked flat.

The garden falls quiet again. Just the hum of bugs and the  
creak of old trees. A moment of deep knowing between the  
three women—like they all just unlocked something sacred.

FADE TO:

29

INT. EBENEEZR DIVE BAR - NIGHT (1964)

Smoke thick in the air. Bar packed tighter than a Sunday  
supper, folks sweating, dancin', laughing. Red neon buzzing  
overhead. On a makeshift stage in the corner, BLIND BILLY  
sits at a beat-up upright piano, hands gliding like butter,  
keys singin' under his touch. The crowd sways with the  
rhythm, bodies moving like water, hips rocking, heads  
bobbing. A voice hollers from the crowd—

PATRON #1

Aye Blind Billy! Some white folks  
in here listenin' to yo' music  
tonight!

BILLY

(chuckling, head tilted)  
Ain't no color in the blues, baby.  
We all bleedin' the same sound.

Crowd laughs, claps. Another voice calls out.

PATRON #2

Play that "Free Man" song, Billy!  
C'mon now!

VOICE FROM THE BACK

Yeah yeah, Blind Billy! "Free Man!"

BLIND BILLY nods slow, his fingers hovering just above the keys. The crowd hushes down, leaning in close. He tilts his head toward the voice that called out, like he seeing 'em through sound.

BILLY

Aight now... y'all know the words.  
Y'all gon' sing it wit' me, right?

CROWD

Yessir!

Billy places his fingers on the keys. A low, aching chord rises—rich with the sorrow and beauty of the Deep South.

BILLY

(singing)

It's gon' be better... It's gon' be  
better...

BILLY (CONT'D)

My granddaddy ain't even know where  
he come from...

CROWD

Laa, la, laa, la, laa, la, laa,  
laaaa...

BILLY

His granddaddy ain't know where he  
come from...

CROWD

Laa, la, laa, la, laa, la, laa,  
laaaa...

BILLY

But I knows where I come from...  
I's from Mississippi. My granddaddy  
was a slave out in that cotton  
field...

CROWD

(louder now)

Laa, la, laa, la, laa, la, laa,  
laaaa...

BILLY  
Yeah, his granddaddy picked cotton  
'til the sun bled dry...

CROWD  
Laa, la, laa, la, laa, la, laa,  
laaaa...

BILLY  
I worked them same fields too...  
but I's a free man.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
(pounds the low keys—deep,  
like thunder)  
Yankee folks only see snow in the  
winter... but I see snow in the  
summer. Their snow melts... mine  
don't. Cotton don't melt. But I's a  
free man.

He leans back, lets that last note hang in the air. Then—

BILLY (CONT'D)  
It's gon' be better... It's gon' be  
better...

CROWD  
(clapping, singing,  
stomping)  
Laa, la, laa, la, laa, la, laa,  
laaaa...

The bar erupts — cheers, whistles, folks pounding tables and stomping boots. A white man writing down musical notation—stealing his music. MIRIAM, standing in the back, ears sharp, catches a different sound—

30 INT. EBENEEZER DIVE BAR - NIGHT (1964)

The song's still swelling with folks singing like hearts crying in harmony. But way in the back, a low murmur starts creeping in. KIARA JASMINE, still in her work apron, clocked out but still wearing the day on her face, catches it. She eases closer, ears perked.

PATRON #3  
(low, shaking his head)  
Shame we ain't gon' be hearin'  
Blind Billy much longer. Cops  
sayin' we all gotta clear on out.  
That new Pearl River Dam done  
finished buildin'.  
(MORE)

PATRON #3 (CONT'D)  
 Once they do, water's gon' rise.  
 Whole town of Ebenezer? Underwater.

PATRON #4  
 (nodding, voice heavy as  
 wet cotton)  
 Y'all need to be outta here by end  
 of the month. Say it's a flood zone  
 now. Reservoir risin'. Folks gotta  
 go. And if you ain't got no deed or  
 nothin'? No check, no nothin'.

KIARA JASMINE  
 (frowning, stepping up  
 close)  
 Wait now—what y'all talkin' 'bout?

PATRON #3  
 (scoffs)  
 You ain't heard? Whole town got two  
 weeks, tops. They fixin' to move  
 everybody out.

KIARA JASMINE  
 (stunned)  
 I—I didn't know nothin' 'bout that!

PATRON #4  
 (bitter smirk, arms  
 crossed)  
 Police been ridin' 'round lettin'  
 folks know quiet-like. Some folks  
 gettin' a payout—but only if they  
 got them papers. If it ain't in  
 writin'? You just outta luck. Gotta  
 pack up and go.

KIARA JASMINE's jaw tightens. Hands ball up like she ready to  
 swing at the wind. Her voice lifts, sharp and hurt.

KIARA JASMINE  
 We been livin' here all our lives!  
 Our folks before us! Granddaddies,  
 great-granddaddies, worked this  
 land—bled for it! They can't just  
 take it 'cause we ain't got no  
 fancy piece of paper!

The table falls quiet. The whole bar feel the shift—like a  
 storm building inside her.

PATRON #5

(leans in, eyes narrow)  
 Heard tell if them Windsors say  
 it's ours, they'll honor it. Say  
 the records might be sittin' up in  
 that big ol' house... somewheres.

KIARA JASMINE lets out a long, shaky breath.

31 INT. KIARA JASMINE'S HOME - NEXT MORNING

A LOUD KNOCK rattles the front door. Sun barely peeking  
 through the curtains. KIARA JASMINE jumps up, still in her  
 nightclothes. She rushes to the door and swings it open.

Two white DEPUTIES stand there - hats on, not smiling.

DEPUTY #1

(stiffly, with authority)  
 Mornin', ma'am.

DEPUTY #1 (CONT'D)

Did you hear about new Pearl river  
 dam is finished building I doubt  
 closing the dam door Y'all need to  
 be outta here by month's end.  
 River's risin'. Whole town of  
 Ebenezer gonna be under water.

KIARA JASMINE

(emotionless and tired but  
 standing her ground)  
 And where we s'posed to go? Huh?  
 You gon' help us move? 'Cause we  
 sure can't afford it.

DEPUTY #2

(curtly)  
 Notices been goin' out. Ain't y'all  
 settled with the government yet?

KIARA JASMINE

We don't even get no mail out here.  
 Ain't no mailman comin' through  
 them woods.

DEPUTY #1

(sighs, tips his hat back)  
 Then you best go on down to the  
 courthouse. Find out if you got  
 deed to the land.

KIARA JASMINE

They ain't helped us none so far.  
All they do is pass us from one  
desk to the next, actin' like we  
invisible.

DEPUTY #2

(sternly)

We're just doin' our job, ma'am. If  
you got complaints, take it up at  
the courthouse.

Without another word, the deputies tip their hats and walk  
off. Dust kicks up behind their patrol car as it drives away  
down the dirt road.

MIRIAM, standing behind her mother, KIARA JASMINE, watches  
the taillights disappear into the trees. Her face tight, eyes  
full of worry... and wondering what they going to do now.

32

INT. KIARA JASMINE'S HOME - MORNING

KIARA JASMINE shuts the door gentle-like. Her face tight,  
brows knitted up with worry. She leans back against the  
frame, takin' a deep breath. MIRIAM, sitting on the edge of  
the couch, looks up with wide eyes.

MIRIAM

(soft, scared)

We gon' be okay, Momma?

KIARA JASMINE

(kneeling down, stroking  
her daughter's hair)

Yeah, baby. We gon' be just fine.  
Yo' momma headin' down to that  
courthouse first thing. Good Lawd  
ain't never failed us yet.

FADE TO:

33

INT. MADISON COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

The place buzzing—full of folk from Ebenezer. Voices mix in  
frustration and confusion. Long lines snake past wood-paneled  
walls. KIARA JASMINE weave through the crowd, heading toward  
a DESK CLERK behind a big counter.

DESK CLERK

(calling out)

I can help y'all right here!  
(MORE)

DESK CLERK (CONT'D)  
Y'all here 'bout a settlement, or  
y'all file a complaint today?

KIARA JASMINE  
(stepping up, polite but  
firm)  
We here 'bout a settlement, ma'am.  
about new Pearl river dam We ain't  
got no reimbursement, and they  
fixin' to put us off our land.

DESK CLERK  
(sighs, nodding)  
Mmm. Y'all from Ebenezer then? I'm  
real sorry to hear that, honey.  
What name are we lookin' under?

KIARA JASMINE  
Kiara Jasmine.

The clerk starts flipping through a thick file binder. Her  
fingers flying page to page. Then she frowns.

DESK CLERK  
Hmm... I don't see anything comin'  
up under that name.

KIARA JASMINE  
(voice rising a touch)  
Try Billy Jasmine. That's my daddy.

The clerk pauses — then her eyes light up.

DESK CLERK  
Billy Jasmine? Lord, you talkin'  
'bout the blues man? I heard him  
play once down at the county fair.  
Had folks dancin' in the dirt!

KIARA JASMINE  
(smiles a little)  
Yessum, that's him. He my daddy. We  
been livin' out on Hickory Flat for  
longer'n I been alive. My grand-  
granddaddy farmed that land too.

DESK CLERK  
(flips through files, then  
stops, brows furrowed)  
Hickory Flat... Honey, if we don't  
have a deed on file, chances are  
that land is still listed under the  
Windsor Estate.  
(MORE)



DESK CLERK (CONT'D)

Lotta freed folks stayed on those lands after emancipation, but the papers never got fixed. If Mr. JOHN WINDSOR signs off on it, we can push your reimbursement through.

KIARA JASMINE

(tight-lipped, heart racing)

How I'm s'posed to reach him?

DESK CLERK

You gon' have to go straight to the Windsor office in Jackson. Big white building off Capitol Street.

KIARA JASMINE

(nods, resolute)

Thank you, ma'am. Truly.

34 EXT. EBENEZER GENERAL STORE - DAY

KIARA JASMINE stands out front, clutching a worn satchel. She scans the folks loafing 'round—farmers, old men on crates, truck beds sagging under sacks of feed.

KIARA JASMINE

(calling out, hopeful)

Anybody headin' to Jackson today?  
I'll ride quiet—don't need nothin'  
but a lift.

A FARMER in a dusty truck gives her a nod.

FARMER

Hop on in, Miss KIARA. Got room in the back.

She climbs into the bed of the truck, holding her satchel tight as the truck rumbles down the dirt road.

35 EXT. WINDSOR CORPORATE OFFICE - JACKSON - DAY

Tall white columns, clean glass windows—shiny and cold. KIARA JASMINE steps up, looking outta place but standing proud. She approaches the SECURITY GUARD out front.

KIARA JASMINE

I come hopin' I could speak with Mr. Windsor.

SECURITY GUARD  
(eyebrow raised)  
You got an appointment, ma'am?

KIARA JASMINE  
(shakes her head)  
No sir, I don't. But it's real important.

SECURITY GUARD  
(hands her a clipboard and pen)  
Write your name down and what you here for. I'll hand it over to the secretary.

KIARA JASMINE  
(glancing around)  
I don't got no phone. How she gon' get back to me?

SECURITY GUARD  
'Tween us? You wanna see Mr. WINDSOR... don't waste time here. Go to his house. Wait out front if you got to. Might be your only shot.

KIARA JASMINE  
(nods slow, resolute)  
Thank you, sir. That's all I needed to know.

36 EXT. EBENEZER - GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MIRIAM come running up to her GRANDPA'S porch, dusty and breathing heavy. She knocks once, door creaks open. She steps in.

A second later, UNCLE GARY stumbles through the door behind her, smelling like liquor and grinning wide.

UNCLE GARY  
Well now... lil' Miriam done grow'd up quick. Gettin' prettier every time I see ya.

He reaches out, brushes her hair with his fingers. MIRIAM tenses, eyes flick to the door.

MIRIAM  
(nervous)  
Hey... Uncle Gary.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
(from his rocker, firm)  
I done told you, Gary. Don't come  
'round here no more. You stole from  
yo' own sister.

UNCLE GARY  
(mocking)  
Stole what money, old man? You  
cain't even see straight.(leans  
in)Now, where my cut o' that  
reimbursement money?

KIARA JASMINE steps inside, arms crossed, fed up soon as she  
sees him.

KIARA JASMINE  
Lord have mercy... what you doin'  
back, Gary? Come to pick my pockets  
again?

UNCLE GARY  
(pleading)  
Come on, sis... I heard folks in  
'Neezer gettin' paid big time. I  
just want what's mine.

KIARA JASMINE  
(snapping)  
You don't know nothin' 'bout no  
money, and even if I did—ain't no  
way you gettin' a dime. You don't  
deserve it.

UNCLE GARY  
(angry, stomping his foot)  
Shucks, woman! Don't you play games  
with me! That money belong to the  
family!

KIARA JASMINE  
(to Miriam)  
Grab yo' things, baby. Stay away  
from that man. We goin' home.

UNCLE GARY  
(voice raising)  
You lyin'! I know you got  
somethin'! Don't you walk away from  
me!

KIARA JASMINE  
                   (turning back, firm as  
                   iron)

                  KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)  
                   I told you—we leavin'. And we don't  
                   owe you nothin'.

37           EXT. GRANDPA BLIND BILLY'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Sky pinking up over the treetops. Birds singing soft and slow, like the world's just waking up. KIARA JASMINE packs a cloth bag on the porch. MIRIAM sits on the steps, watching.

                  MIRIAM  
                   Where you goin'?

                  KIARA JASMINE  
                   I gotta head down to Jackson this  
                   mornin'. Court business. You stay  
                   here with Grandpa, alright?

                  MIRIAM  
                   Mama... are we gon' lose the house?  
                   If they take it... where we gon' go?

KIARA JASMINE pauses, looks down at her daughter with calm strength.

                  KIARA JASMINE  
                   Now who been puttin' that mess in  
                   your head? Listen to me, sugar—The  
                   Good Lord is a promise keeper. He  
                   ain't never left us before, and He  
                   sure ain't startin' now. So don't  
                   you go worryin' 'bout nothin', you  
                   hear?

KIARA JASMINE leans down, tucking a curl behind Miriam's ear.

                  KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)  
                   He gon' take care o' us. Just like  
                   He always do.

                  MIRIAM  
                   (nodding, still unsure)  
                   Yes ma'am... Please be safe, Mama.

                  KIARA JASMINE  
                   (giving her a soft smile)  
                   Don't you worry none. I'll be back  
                   'fore supper.

She slings the bag over her shoulder and heads down the dirt path, boots crunching soft on the gravel. MIRIAM watches her until she disappears into the trees.

The screen door creaks. GRANDPA BLIND BILLY steps out, tapping his cane gentle on the porch boards.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
Don't you fret none, sugar.Yo' mama  
tough. Ain't nothin' in this world  
she can't stare down.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
She didn't shed a tear 'til after  
her mama's funeral. Held it all in  
like a dam. That's the kind of  
strong she is.

He rests a weathered hand on MIRIAM's shoulder. Gentle.  
Steady.

MIRIAM  
(quietly)  
Grandpa... how did Grandma pass?

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY lets out a long breath – the kind that  
carries years.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
(sighs deep, voice low)  
She was blind... like me. Was a big  
storm that night.Rain pourin' like  
the Lord was cryin' Himself. River  
took her...

Silence lingers, broken only by birdsong and the soft rustle  
of wind through the trees.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
Now... what ya say we go down to the  
river, do a lil' fishin'? Calm our  
minds some.

MIRIAM  
(small smile, nodding)  
Okay, Grandpa.

They walk off slow toward the tree line. The sun rises behind  
them, warm and gold, stretching across the fields.

38

EXT. PEARL RIVER - MORNING

Sunlight slow-moving water, painting gold morning streaks on the surface. GRANDPA BLIND BILLY taps his stick along the dirt path, leading MIRIAM down a worn trail he knows by heart.

They stop at a bend in the river where the roots of a cypress tree dip into the water. He pats the ground with his stick.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

Right here, baby girl. This the sweet spot. Catfish been hidin' down there since 'fore you was born.

He squats low, fingers moving quick, baiting the hook with leftover cornbread wrapped in chicken skin.

MIRIAM

(frowning, curious)

Grandpa... how you know how to fish if you can't see?

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

(smiling wide)

Mmm. Well, see, God don't never take without givin' back somethin'. He took my eyes, but gave me somethin' better.

With the ease of instinct, he sends the line out - smooth and fluid, like silk on water.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)

I can see music, baby. Like pictures in my mind. It float like birds-colors, shapes, feelings. And I feel the world through my hands, through my feet, through sound. That river talk to me. Wind talk to me. Fish? They talk too, they just don't use no words.

MIRIAM

(quiet, thoughtful)

You can really hear fish?

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

(grinning)

Not with my ears, no.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
But I feel 'em. When the water  
shift, when the air change just a  
smidge. That's how I know.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
I ain't never seen you, sugar... but  
I know you a beautiful girl. I can  
feel your spirit, and it shine. You  
got fire in you—just like yo' mama.  
Just like your grandma had.

MIRIAM blushes, looks down, then suddenly—

MIRIAM  
(grabbing his sleeve)  
Grandpa! Look!

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY doesn't turn his head. He just knows. He  
lifts the pole with a quick, practiced motion. A BIG CATFISH  
jerks up outta the river, tail flapping, scales shining like  
wet tin.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
(laughing deep)  
HA! Told ya! You see that, girl? I  
don't need no eyes to feel  
somethin' good comin'.

MIRIAM claps, eyes wide.

MIRIAM  
Grandpa! That fish bigger than my  
whole arm!

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
That fish be Sunday dinner and  
Monday leftovers! We gon' eat good.

He removes the hook gently, sets the fish in a tin bucket  
with water. They sit in silence for a beat, watching the sun  
dip low over the cypress trees.

MIRIAM  
Grandpa... you think I got a gift  
too? Like you?

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
(Turning toward her, voice  
low and steady)  
Chile... you already do got a gift.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)

You know that voice you got? The way you talk, the way you sing? That voice go straight to folks' hearts. It slip past they walls, slip through the hurt, the anger, the fear—cut right down to the soul. It carry feelin'. It move through matter, baby. That's a power not even most grown folks understand.

He wraps an arm gentle-like around her shoulder.

MIRIAM

(quiet, staring out at the water)

I wish I could go through real walls, Grandpa. I wish I could walk through that bank vault, get some money for Mama... so we don't lose our home.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(her voice cracks)

It ain't fair. She work so hard, and we still might lose everything.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY sits with that a moment, nodding slow like he carrying the same weight in his bones.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

(sighing deep, voice low like he talking to the wind)

Sometimes life gon' box us in, put up walls we cain't break down with no fist nor foot...But the Lord? He make a way clean through that wall.

He is all things... He everywhere. Ain't nothin' too big, too far, or too hard for Him—if you just trust Him.

MIRIAM

(pauses)

You think maybe... I can sing at the church? Raise some money?

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

(smiles wide)

I know you can.



GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
 And when you do... they gon' feel  
 every note like it's God whisperin'  
 in they ear.

He lifts his pole again—another tug on the line. He don't even flinch.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
 Now hush and help me reel this one  
 in. Lord done blessed us with  
 supper.

39

EXT. SHOPPING DISTRICT - DAY

JOHN, LIVVIE, and TIFFANY ROSE stroll down a bustling street, shopping bags in hand. The air hums with conversation — people chatting on sidewalks, the occasional honk in the distance, cars rolling by at a steady pace.

They reach their car, and once they're all settled inside, the mood shifts to a quieter, more private tone.

LIVVIE  
 I can scarcely believe it. The house is all but complete. The grand unveiling next week shall be quite the affair. I must say, I'm thoroughly delighted with how elegantly everything has come together.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 You've worked ever so hard, my dear, and it's evident in the grace and beauty of the final result.

LIVVIE  
 Now, darling, have you sent invitations to everyone on that list?

JOHN WINDSOR  
 Mnhmm... even the ones from way outta state. Big Texas family's coming.

TIFFANY ROSE is sitting quietly in the back seat as they drive on home.

LIVVIE  
 We'll find you some lovely new dresses for the party, darling.

LIVVIE (CONT'D)  
 Something just right for the  
 occasion.

TIFFANY ROSE  
 Mama, can I wear that red one? It's  
 my favorite.

LIVVIE  
 Oh, sweetheart, the red is  
 beautiful, but it doesn't quite go  
 with the colors we've chosen. We  
 need everything to match the theme,  
 remember?

40 EXT. WINDSOR ESTATE - GATED ENTRY - DAY

The Windsor car rolls slowly up the long, winding driveway.

KIARA JASMINE stands quietly in the shade near the gate, eyes  
 fixed on the approaching vehicle.

As it nears without slowing, she steps forward — calm but  
 resolute — and moves directly into its path, arms  
 outstretched, blocking the way.

DRIVER  
 Lord have mercy! Are you out of  
 your mind, woman? Steppin' out like  
 that—you tryin' to get run over?

KIARA JASMINE  
 I been standin' out here all  
 mornin', waitin' to speak with the  
 Windsors. It's real important.

JOHN leans up from the back seat.

JOHN WINDSOR  
 Ask her what she wants.

Driver relays the question.

KIARA JASMINE  
 Sir, I need yo signature so we can  
 get reimbursed for our house down  
 by Pearl River. They makin' us  
 move, sayin' we don't own the land  
 'cause we ain't got no deed. But  
 they say it was yo family's land.

TIFFANY ROSE

Daddy, you oughta help her. She seem nice.

LIVVIE

Yes, honey. We should help her.

JOHN and LIVVIE step out of the car.

JOHN WINDSOR

Ma'am, how can I help you?

KIARA JASMINE

I'm real sorry for comin' to yo home, sir. I wouldn' do it 'less it was mighty urgent.

JOHN WINDSOR

It's alright. Go ahead, tell me what's going on.

KIARA JASMINE

They pushin' us out the house 'cause of all that floodin' down in the Pearl River Valley. That new dam's messin' everything up.

JOHN WINDSOR

Yeah, I heard something about that. I'm sorry y'all being put out like that.

KIARA JASMINE

Thank you, sir. Courthouse say the land used to be yo family's, but we ain't got no paper sayin' it belong to my great-granddaddy. They won't pay us without you signin' off.

JOHN WINDSOR

Goodness, my grandfather owned so much land, I can't say for certain who lives where these days. May I ask your name, dear?

KIARA JASMINE

Kiara Jasmine, sir.

LIVVIE

(cocking her head like she was talking to a child)  
There's no need to fret, dear.  
(MORE)

LIVVIE (CONT'D)

If you walk with the Lord, He'll  
make a way. We'll be lifting you up  
in prayer.

KIARA JASMINE

Bless you, ma'am. This mean  
everything to my folks. You truly a  
blessin'. May the good Lord bless  
y'all.

TIFFANY ROSE beams at her parents, proud of them for trying  
to help the lady.

KIARA JASMINE heads back down the road as JOHN and LIVVIE get  
back in the car.

LIVVIE

Do you know who she is?

JOHN WINDSOR

No, can't say I've ever seen her  
before. No idea where she's living,  
either. But don't worry - I'll look  
into it.

LIVVIE

I thought all that land  
reimbursement had already been  
settled with the government. Didn't  
you take care of that?

JOHN WINDSOR

I did, honey. That's what paid for  
the renovations on Windsor House.

The car continues up the drive and eases to a stop in front  
of the grand old house.

41

EXT. GRANDPA BLIND BILLY'S HOUSE - EVENING

The sun hangs low on the horizon, casting a golden hue over  
the dusty yard. Crickets chirp in the grass, and frogs begin  
their song in the distance.

The weathered screen door groans on its hinges as KIARA  
JASMINE hurries up the porch steps - breathless, eyes  
scanning, heart pounding. She reaches the door and pushes it  
open.

42

INT. GRANDPA BLIND BILLY'S LIVING ROOM

KIARA JASMINE

Lawd, Jesus...

KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)

(relieved)

Thank you. Thank you, Lord.

She steps in, kneels down fast, and pulls MIRIAM into her arms.

KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)

(softly, holding her  
close)

Baby, you alright? You okay?

MIRIAM

(nods, smiling proud)

I stayed right next to Grandpa the whole time, Mama. We even went fishin' down by the creek. I caught me a lil' ol' catfish too.

KIARA JASMINE

(kissing the top of her  
head)

That's good, baby. That's real good. Mama's sorry she ran out like that. I had somethin' I had to take care of.

MIRIAM

Where'd you go, Mama?

KIARA JASMINE

(sitting down beside her  
now, sighing deep)

I went tryin' to find us a place, baby. A new house. Somewhere we can be safe, where the water don't rise up and take everythin' we got.

MIRIAM

Did you find it?

KIARA JASMINE

(pauses, thinking)

It went alright. Not done yet, but... we got folks listenin' now. We just gotta hold on.

She pulls MIRIAM close again, wrapping both arms around her.

KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(softly, looking up like  
praying)

We gon' be alright. I know it in my  
bones. The Good Lord—He look out  
for His children. We just gotta  
trust Him. Keep on prayin'. He  
always make a way, even when we  
cain't see it yet.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

(from his chair)

Ain't nothin' too big for the Lord,  
baby girl. Storms come and go, but  
the Lord? He stay right there.

KIARA JASMINE

(nods, quietly)

Yes, sir.

MIRIAM

Can I sleep next to you tonight,  
Mama?

KIARA JASMINE

(smiling)

Course you can, sugar. We gon' be  
right here together. Ain't nothin'  
gon' harm you while Mama breathin'.

The three of them sit quiet for a moment, the night humming  
outside — crickets singin', wind rustling the trees.

KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(whispers, rocking her  
daughter gently)

We gon' make it. One way or  
'nother... we gon' make it.

43

INT. WINDSOR HOUSE - DAY

The house bustles like a stirred-up anthill. SERVANTS move  
briskly through the parlor—setting the table, hanging  
ribbons, polishing silver to a shine.

The air is thick with summer heat and the sweet haze of  
perfume.

LIVVIE

Now who, in heaven's name, decided  
to set the table with this old  
china?

MAID

(nervously, wringing her  
hands)

I did, ma'am. It's the set we've  
always used when company comes.

LIVVIE

Well, this isn't just some casual  
little gathering. This is the  
unveiling of New Windsor House. I  
was very clear – today's color  
scheme is white. White, not  
eggshell, not ivory. White. Now  
please, pack this away immediately.  
The new china from New York should  
be arriving any minute.

MAID

Yes, ma'am. Right away.

LIVVIE

(turning to her husband,  
arms crossed)

John Windsor, please tell me you  
remembered to order the caviar from  
New Orleans?

JOHN WINDSOR

(looking sheepish)

I—I'm afraid it slipped my mind.  
I'm sorry.

LIVVIE

Lord help me... If we want it fresh,  
we'd best place that call this  
instant. I swear, if I don't stay  
on top of you men, nothing ever  
gets done.

TIFFANY ROSE

(approaching slowly,  
curious)

Mama?

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)

Do you remember that lady from  
yesterday? The colored lady who was  
standing by the gate?

LIVVIE

Thank you for reminding me, TIFFANY ROSE. Darling, would you mind calling to find out who she is? I believe her name was Kara... or was it Kiara?

LIVVIE (CONT'D)

(pauses, shifting focus)  
And don't forget the caviar. Actually - order that first. And go ahead and add lobster to the list while you're at it.

JOHN WINDSOR

Of course, dear. Consider it done.

44

INT. WINDSOR STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

A quiet room, JOHN picks up the phone and dials. He leans back in his leather chair, waiting.

JOHN WINDSOR

(Speaking into the phone)  
Good morning, this is JOHN WINDSOR calling from the estate. I was hoping to speak with the SHERIFF over in Madison County—it's regarding a piece of land out near the Pearl River.

SHERIFF

(cheerful Southern drawl over the line)  
Well, good mornin' to you, Mr. WINDSOR! Everything alright your way? Anybody givin' you trouble? We'll get it taken care of, no problem.

JOHN WINDSOR

Nothing urgent, SHERIFF. We had a woman at our gate yesterday, Kara, I think she said. Or KIARA. Claimed she's living out near where they're putting up the new reservoir.

SHERIFF

Ah, yes sir, that'd be KIARA JASMINE. We've been tryin' to get her folks relocated for a spell now.

(MORE)



SHERIFF (CONT'D)

She's been holding out — wants some paperwork signed or what have you.

JOHN WINDSOR

That's the one. Look, I'd prefer not to see her caught up in anything. If you could see to it she gets whatever it is she needs, I'd be grateful.

SHERIFF

Of course, Mr. WINDSOR. We'll take care of it. Wouldn't want her stirrin' anything up—especially with your big weekend ahead. I heard y'all expecting some important folks?

JOHN WINDSOR

Yes sir, guests from out of state. Very important.

SHERIFF

Then we'll have a few of the boys keep a close eye on things around the property. Make sure everything stays nice and quiet for your event.

JOHN WINDSOR

Much appreciated, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Always a pleasure, Mr. Windsor. Y'all take care now.

45

INT. MADISON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A dusty fan spins slow overhead. The SHERIFF, a stout man with a sweat-stained hat and a cigarette tucked behind one ear, leans back in his creaky leather chair. He motions for two DEPUTIES to step in.

SHERIFF

Alright, gentlemen. We've got a situation out by the river. That KIARA JASMINE woman is still holding her ground like she owns the entire valley. And now some of the other families are starting to follow suit—refusing to move.

DEPUTY #1

(tipping his hat back)

Yes, sir. Word is she's stirring up talk. Folks think if they dig in, they might squeeze more money out of the county.

DEPUTY #2

(crossing his arms)

Plenty of them acting like they're owed something. As if they don't understand what eminent domain means. That land's been marked for the reservoir--there's no debating it.

DEPUTY #3

(from the corner, leaning on the doorframe)

Far as I see it, they're just stalling. Hoping to delay long enough for a bigger payout -- or maybe to rile up some press.

DEPUTY #1

(with a sly grin)

Well, maybe it's time we made an example of Miss JASMINE. Charge her with trespassing or unlawful occupation. Let her spend a night in the jailhouse. That might send a clear message to the rest.

SHERIFF

(nods slowly, squinting out the window)

That might just do the trick. We're not trying to be cruel, but that river's going to rise, whether they like it or not. Water doesn't wait on anyone.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

This is for their own good... truth be told, it's for everybody's.

DEPUTY #2

Then we'd better move fast before they get too organized.

SHERIFF

Exactly. Get a unit out there before sundown.

(MORE)

SHERIFF (CONT'D)  
Be respectful—but firm. And if she  
resists, bring her in.

DEPUTY #1  
Yes sir. Consider it done.

SHERIFF  
(tapping his desk with  
finality)  
We'll put a stop to this nonsense  
before it spreads. Folks need to  
understand that we're not playing  
around.

The men nod, straighten their hats, and file out.

46 EXT. KIARA JASMINE'S HOUSE - SUNSET

The sky glows in hues of deep orange and crimson, casting a  
fiery reflection across the Pearl River—like flames dancing  
on water.

Suddenly—WHOOOP WHOOOP WHOOOP.

Three sheriff's cruisers barrel up the dirt road, dust rising  
in their wake, headlights slicing through the trees.  
Searchlights flood the house, harsh and unrelenting—like  
judgment arriving at dusk. Car doors slam. Heavy boots hit  
the ground. Fists pound against the front door with the  
weight and fury of a coming storm.

MIRIAM  
(eyes wide, frightened)  
Mama... what's goin' on?

KIARA JASMINE  
(rising quick, steadying  
her voice)  
Go on, baby — stay by Grandpa.  
Don't move.

KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)  
(steadily but firm)  
Evenin', officers. What y'all doin'  
out here?

DEPUTY #1  
(curtly)  
You going to need to come with us,  
ma'am.

KIARA JASMINE  
Come with y'all for what?

DEPUTY #2

(coldly)

They need to speak with you down at the station.

KIARA JASMINE

(confused, brows furrowed)

Why? I ain't done nothin'.

DEPUTY #1

(reaching for her arm)

You're being charged with invading private property.

KIARA JASMINE

(pulling back slightly)

This is my property! My family been on this land near a hundred years.

DEPUTY #2

You can explain all that at the station.

DEPUTY #1

(tighter grip)

Let's go now. Don't make it harder than it gotta be.

MIRIAM

(from the doorway, crying out)

Mama!!

KIARA JASMINE

(turning back, holding strong)

It's alright, baby! Mama gon' be back soon, you hear me? Ain't nothin' to be scared of. You stay with Grandpa.

The squad car door slams shut. Tires spin out in the gravel, the taillights disappearing down the road.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

(voice low, eyes never leaving the road)

Lawd... what they doin' to us now?

He puts a weathered arm around MIRIAM, holding her tight as her little tears fall. They sit silently, watching the night swallow the dust trail.

47 EXT. EBENEEZER - EARLY MORNIN'

The sky begins to crack open with light, soft rays spilling over the horizon. A few townsfolk linger on the streets, gathered in small clusters, speaking in hushed tones.

Concern etches their faces—unease hanging in the morning air like fog that just won't lift.

WOMAN #1

They done took KIARA JASMINE last night, Lord have mercy.

MAN #1

She ain't done nothin' but try an' keep her people safe...

WOMAN #2

(gathering her bags)

I ain't waitin' round for 'em to come knockin' on my door next. Time to go.

Folks start packing fast, stuffing clothes in old trunks and boxes, throwing 'em in the back of pickups. Ebenezer got the feel of a town being swallowed whole.

48 EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The porch creaks beneath UNCLE GARY's weight as he staggers up, eyes wild, the sharp scent of alcohol clinging to him.

He doesn't bother to knock — just throws the door open, crashing in like a storm breaking loose.

UNCLE GARY

Shit, man! They done got her! Damn fools. I told 'em. I told y'all this gon' happen! Cops dragged her off 'cause she ain't move like they told her! I told y'all... I told y'all let me handle the damn money! Everybody else cashin' in—and we sittin' here with dirt in our hands!

His eyes find MIRIAM standing in the corner, frozen.

UNCLE GARY (CONT'D)

(steps toward MIRIAM, arms wide)

Come here, girl... Uncle Gary gon' keep you safe now.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
 (steady voice, firm)  
 You stay yo no-good self right  
 there, son. Miriam stayin' with me.

UNCLE GARY  
 (dark laugh)  
 Heh... What you gon' do, old man? You  
 blind as a bat. You can't see  
 nothin', can't stop nothin'. Town  
 already dead. Ain't nothin' here  
 but ghosts an' lies. But when the  
 white devil come knockin'? Shoo...  
 I'll shoot first.

Suddenly, he lunges forward and grabs MIRIAM.

MIRIAM  
 (screaming)  
 Grandpa! GRANDPA!!

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
 (rushing forward, reaching  
 out)  
 Don't you dare lay hands on her!

He moves too fast. His foot slips off the top step. His cane  
 ain't near. He tumbles down the stairs hard - THUD - and his  
 head hits the floor, knocking him out cold.

MIRIAM  
 (crying)

49 GRANDPA!!

But UNCLE GARY doesn't stop. He drags her off like a madman.

50 INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dark. Cramped. Cold. UNCLE GARY zips up his pants with a  
 smirk, then passes out drunk, slumping in a chair, muttering  
 nonsense.

MIRIAM, trembling, too scared to cry loud. She watches.  
 Waits.

He starts to snore. She bolts out the door.

51 EXT. BARN - NIGHT

MIRIAM runs barefoot through tall grass, moonlight spilling over her. She slips inside the old barn - the place she used to hide as a little girl. She curls up in the hay, arms wrapped tightly around her knees. She rocks herself, singing so low you can barely hear her.

MIRIAM

(softly singing)

Lift me up, into the clouds. Show  
me what it's like to look down upon  
the crowd. Pick me up, off the  
ground. I want to fly through the  
wind-don't want to come down.

52 EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY begins to stir, a low moan escaping his lips. His leg lies at an unnatural angle, twisted badly, and a thin line of blood trails from his brow. He groans again, reaching out with a trembling hand, searching for his cane. But it's nowhere within reach.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY

(weak but calling)

Miriam...?

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)

(louder, more desperate)

MIRIAM!! Baby girl!! Where are  
you?!

His voice echoes into the empty Mississippi night.

53 EXT. WINDSOR HOUSE - DAY

The sun spills like warm honey over the grandest estate in all of Mississippi. The Windsor House rises in stately splendor, its white columns gleaming in the light, while azaleas blaze in full bloom, vivid as fire. Gleaming Cadillacs glide up the long, white-graveled drive. Chauffeurs step out with practiced grace, opening doors for passengers draped in elegance and pearls. Beneath the canopy of ancient oaks, a chamber orchestra plays, the soft strains of violins drifting on the breeze. It is Southern society at its most refined—a portrait of old-world grace and quiet grandeur.

JOHN WINDSOR (mid-50s, dignified and confident, dressed in a crisp white suit) and his wife LIVVIE WINDSOR (early 40s, hair swept up, pearls tight 'round her neck), stand proudly at the top of the marble steps.

At their side, TIFFANY ROSE (11), radiant and sharp-eyed), stands with perfect posture — though her bright red shoes hint at rebellion. They greet their guests with Southern charm, all smiles and polished grace.

JOHN WINDSOR

Welcome, Senators — please, do come in. You must be sweltering in those coats under this Southern sun.

SENATOR #1

(smiling warmly)

Thank you kindly, John. The estate looks more magnificent than ever.

As they make their way toward the house, JOHN pauses, catching sight of a familiar young man stepping out from the shadows.

JOHN WINDSOR

(with a pleased grin)

Well now — if it isn't Little Ricky. My word, you've grown. Hollywood seems to be treating you just fine.

LITTLE RICKY

(tipping his hat respectfully)

Yes, sir. I've been blessed. But I must say, there's nothing quite like being back on Southern soil.

A sudden hush falls over the gathering. From the sleek

Cadillac at the drive's edge, ELVIS PRESLEY emerges, a living legend in the flesh. Fans catch sight of him and immediately begin whispering, fanning themselves with wide-eyed wonder. JOHN steps forward with genuine warmth, extending his hand.

JOHN WINDSOR

Mr. Presley — it's a true privilege. We're honored by your presence here today.

ELVIS

(smiling, smooth as honey)

Oh, it's nothin' at all. I'm a Mississippi boy through and through—and this place? I've heard about Windsor House my whole life. Figured it was time I came to see what all the fuss was about.



Behind him rolls up another long black car. The BUSH FAMILY exits, polished and powerful. JOHN strides to greet MR. BUSH, firm handshake ready.

JOHN WINDSOR

Well if it isn't George Bush himself. Welcome, friend. Long haul from Texas — we appreciate it.

MR. BUSH

(leans in, shaking hands  
in a quiet Masonic grip)  
John, you know our daddies were both 33rd-degree Masons. Brotherhood runs deep—we more kin than folks realize.

LIVVIE

(chiming in)  
How's Barbara? Y'all must come stay with us next time you pass through Jackson.

A moment later, ROBERT INGLE, president of the Bank of Mississippi, arrives with his teenage son CHRIS. JOHN beams and steps forward.

JOHN WINDSOR

Robert! My word, we couldn't have accomplished any of this without you.

ROBERT

Now don't go saying that, John. The Windsors have the finest credit in all of Mississippi. You're as solid as the state capitol, and everyone knows it.

John turns, noticing a young boy standing nearby.

JOHN WINDSOR

Well now, who's this young man? Is he your son?

ROBERT

Yes sir, this is my boy, CHRIS. He just turned fifteen.

JOHN WINDSOR

Well I'll be, it's a pleasure to finally meet you. Your father's always speaking so highly of you.  
(MORE)

JOHN WINDSOR (CONT'D)  
Says you'll be helping run the bank  
one day.

CHRIS  
It's real nice to meet you too,  
sir.

And your house... it's  
beautiful.

John turns to TIFFANY ROSE, who's been watching CHRIS with a  
mix of curiosity and a faint blush.

JOHN WINDSOR  
TIFFANY ROSE, honey, why don't you  
take Chris on down to the youth  
gathering? Show him around a bit.

TIFFANY ROSE  
(nods sweetly at her dad  
and turn to CHRIS with a  
shy smile)

TIFFANY ROSE (CONT'D)  
Yes, Daddy. Please, follow me,  
Chris. This way, if you will.

CHRIS  
(nervous, trying to sound  
confident)  
Thank you. I-I like your dress...  
especially your red shoes.

TIFFANY ROSE pauses mid-step as something shifts in the air.  
She stops, her breath catching – just for a moment. Her eyes  
go distant, as if caught in a waking dream.

A vision flickers: soft music, a veil drifting in the breeze,  
faces she can't quite place... a wedding. The feeling brushes  
over her like silk on skin. A breeze. A flash. Her heart  
skips.

TIFFANY ROSE  
(softly, snapping back to  
the present)  
Thank you.

She leads him away, red shoes tapping against the stone path.

54

INT. WINDSOR HOUSE - GRAND HALL - LATER

LIVVIE WINDSOR floats ahead of a group of well-dressed ladies, her heels clicking on the polished marble floor. Crystal chandeliers sparkle overhead. Among the women is the elegant FIRST LADY OF MISSISSIPPI, gloved and perfectly coiffed.

LIVVIE

(gesturing proudly toward  
the tall windows)

These drapes? They came directly  
from the Bates textile mill up in  
Maine - crafted in true 17th-  
century British fashion. Just look  
at that stitching. Isn't it  
exquisite?

GUEST #1

(gasps, hand to her  
pearls)

Oh my stars! Just lovely, LIVVIE.  
And the color - so rich!

GUEST #2

Yes ma'am, it's divine! You've  
certainly got an eye, sugar.

LIVVIE

(smiling with restrained  
pride)

Well, thank you. Now upstairs, we  
have twenty-two guest bedrooms -  
not including the master suite or  
TIFFANY ROSE's own quarters. Each  
room's designed with its own unique  
theme.

GUEST #1

(eyes widening)

Twenty-two?

LIVVIE

Mmhmm. Let's see. There's the  
Lavender Room, the Blue Bird Room,  
the Victorian Room... And the entire  
third floor's done in an Oriental  
motif. I spent years gathering fine  
pieces from abroad - some of the  
other furniture is quite rare,  
passed down through the family.

GUEST #3

(fanning herself)

Well I declare... LIVVIE, this may be the grandest home in the whole country!

GUEST #1

(laughing softly)

It's certainly the largest I've seen in Mississippi, I'll say that much.

GUEST #2

(chuckling)

Might not outsize the Biltmore up in North Carolina, but this one has more soul - no doubt about that.

LIVVIE

(beaming with pride, hands gently clasped)

Well, bless you for saying that.

LIVVIE (CONT'D)

We do try to keep a little Southern grace in every corner.

The women exchange nods and gentle smiles, their voices soft with admiration, the air thick with perfume and the quiet hum of genteel envy.

55

EXT. WINDSOR ESTATE - GARDEN - SAME TIME

Out by the edge of the perfectly trimmed hedges, a small group of teenage boys loiter under the shade of a magnolia. CHRIS (clean-cut, confident) stands next to GEORGE BUSH (polite, out-of-state cool), both sipping on cold Cokes from glass bottles. Laughter trickles from the main house.

CHRIS

Name's Chris. What about you?

GEORGE

George. I'm outta Texas.

CHRIS

(grinning)

Well now, that explains the way you talk. First time in Mississippi?

GEORGE

Yeah. It's a whole lot more wet out here. Texas heat's dry.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

It doesn't cling to your skin the way this does.

CHRIS

(nods)

Yeah, well... Mississippi's also slow. Real slow. Small towns get so quiet, you can just about hear the dust settle. Not much to do 'cept sweat and stir up trouble.

An OLDER BOY with slicked-back hair leans against a nearby tree, a smirk tugging at his mouth.

OLDER BOY

Bored, huh? I've got an idea...

The other boys turn to look at him.

OLDER BOY (CONT'D)

Y'all ever been out near that old colored town they cleared for the reservoir? There's nothin' left now but broken-down shacks and ghost stories.

We could head out there... play a little Klansmen.

A few of the boys chuckle uneasily. The out of towners look at each other. One nudges another, eyes wide, uncertain if it's a joke or something worse.

CHRIS

(half-joking, half-intrigued)

You serious? How're we supposed to get out there?

OLDER BOY

I got my daddy's pickup. And he's still got his robes--been hanging in the closet since back when he used to march.

The boys exchange glances -- equal parts thrill, ignorance, and danger flickering beneath their expressions.

56

INT. WINDSOR HOUSE - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

The chandelier sparkles above the ballroom like a crown of stars. The scent of cigars and champagne drifts through the room. Guests dressed in black tie and gowns laugh over oysters and caviar.

JOHN WINDSOR steps up to the center of the grand hall, silver glass in hand. He gives it a firm CLINK.

JOHN WINDSOR  
(clearing his throat, warm  
Southern baritone)  
Ladies and gentlemen, if I could  
kindly have your attention.

The crowd quiets down.

JOHN WINDSOR (CONT'D)  
On behalf of my wife, LIVVIE, our  
daughter TIFFANY ROSE, and myself,  
I want to extend our heartfelt  
thanks to each and every one of you  
for joining us this evening.

JOHN WINDSOR (CONT'D)  
Here in Mississippi, hospitality  
isn't just a tradition—it runs in  
our blood. The Windsor House stands  
not only as a symbol of our  
family's heritage and future... but  
also, I must say, as a shining  
reflection of my wife's unwavering  
eye for beauty and detail.

JOHN WINDSOR (CONT'D)  
(turns to LIVVIE)  
Thank you, darlin'. You outdid  
yourself.

LIVVIE  
(modest smile, blushing  
lightly)  
Well now, you're too sweet. Just  
wanted it to be something special  
for Mississippi.

JOHN turns toward a nearby table where ELVIS PRESLEY lounges,  
surrounded by admirers.

JOHN WINDSOR  
Mr. Presley... it sure would honor  
us if you'd share a tune.

ELVIS  
(grinning, rising with  
effortless ease)  
The pleasure's mine, sir. It's a  
beautiful night, surrounded by  
beautiful people. Let's enjoy  
ourselves and have a little fun.

He strolls to the band, nods at the bandleader.

ELVIS (CONT'D)  
 (with a wink and a grin)  
 Let's liven things up a bit—how  
 'bout All Shook Up, boys?

The band kicks in. The room erupts in cheers, ladies fan themselves and sway to the rhythm. The party's in full swing now. It's grand, glittering, and deep-down Southern.

57 EXT. ABANDONED TOWN OF EBENEZER - SUNSET

A rusted old sign hangs crooked on its post, creaking softly as the wind whistles through the tall pines.

The final sliver of sunlight slips beneath the treeline, casting long shadows across the earth. Dust rises in thick clouds as a beat-up Ford pickup roars up the dirt road, its bed packed with rowdy teenage boys—hooting, hollering, the thrill of mischief in the air. The truck skids to a halt in a cloud of grit and gravel.

DRIVER BOY  
 Alright, fellas — everybody out.  
 Did we bring the outfits?

BOY #1  
 (grinning, holding up a  
 bundle of white  
 pillowcases with crude  
 eyeholes)  
 Right here. Mama's linens'll never  
 be the same. Put 'em on—no need for  
 anyone to know who's who.

BOY #2  
 Anyone bring torches?

DRIVER BOY  
 They're in the back with the rest.  
 Take what you need. Let's get to  
 it.

The truck kicks up gravel as it peels off again, heading deeper down the shadowy road toward the Pearl River, laughter trailing behind.

58 EXT. EBENEZER TOWN - NIGHT

The pickup creeps down a narrow dirt path. Spanish moss drapes the old trees like ghosts.

Houses lean sideways, windows long busted out. A place left behind. An owl hoots. The wind sighs through the empty church steeple.

BUSH  
(looking toward Chris)  
You alright over there?

CHRIS  
(trying to sound steady)  
Yeah... I'm fine.

BUSH  
(smirking)  
Nothing to worry about. Just a bit of fun, that's all.

BOY #3  
You sure this place is empty?

BOY #4  
(glancing around)  
They cleared everyone out months ago. Nobody's left.

DRIVER BOY  
(jumping down from the truck bed)  
Alright, boys! This is it. Let's stir things up.

The group scatters in all directions—grabbing torches, pulling pillowcases over their heads, laughter echoing through the trees. They stumble over roots and cracked porch steps, a mess of nervous energy and reckless bravado.

59

EXT. OLD BARN - NIGHT

CHRIS lingers at the edge, watching as the others vanish into the dark, their laughter fading into the trees. His gaze drifts to an old barn nearby—its roof bowed with age, doors hanging crooked on rusted hinges. Something about it pulls at him. He takes a cautious step closer. From within, a soft humming rises - gentle, steady, almost like a lullaby carried on the night air.

CHRIS  
Hello...? Anyone in there?



60 INT. OLD BARN - NIGHT

The air inside is thick with dust and cobwebs. Moonlight spills through slats in the wood. MIRIAM, barely ten, huddles in the far corner, still and silent. Her soft humming cuts off the second she hears the boy's voice.

CHRIS  
(stepping carefully)  
Is... is somebody here?

CHRIS glances around, his breath catching in his throat. The barn is thick with shadows, still and quiet. Dust floats in the air like ash. Near a pile of hay, a ragged doll lies facedown-forgotten, delicate. He bends down and picks it up, holding it gently, as if it might break.

61 SLAM!

The barn

door slams shut behind him, the wind howling through the cracks.

62 CLANK!

The latch falls. Locked.

CHRIS  
(rattling the door, voice  
rising)  
Hey! Hey, y'all! Somebody open the  
door!

Silence answers. Inside the barn, the air grows heavier, dense and still. MIRIAM doesn't move.

63 EXT. EBENEZER TOWN - NIGHT

The once quiet ruins now flicker orange and red, Flames lick up the sides of the old houses. Laughter echoes through the ghost town as the boys, with their faces covered with pillowcase hoods, run wild.

BOY #5  
(cheering)  
C'mon now-don't stop here! We have  
more shacks to light up!

They sprint toward the next row of abandoned homes, torches high, like devils dancing in firelight.

64

INT. OLD BARN - NIGHT

CHRIS pounds his fists hard on the barn door, eyes burnin', sweat and soot mixing on his face.

CHRIS

HEY! Y'all hear me?! I'm stuck in  
here! OPEN THE DAMN DOOR!

Smoke creeps in through the cracks, thick and fast. The fire crackles closer, wood popping, air heating up. CHRIS yanks off his pillowcase hood, presses it to his mouth—but it's too late. He coughs hard, staggers, drops to his knees, then collapses to the ground. In the shadows, MIRIAM sits curled up in the corner, knees to her chest, eyes wide, watching the boy. She waits a beat, then she moves.

MIRIAM

(crawling to him)  
Hey... hey, you okay?

MIRIAM shakes CHRIS's shoulder once, then twice. No response. The smoke thickens, curling around them in choking spirals. Overhead, the wooden beams groan, strained and splintering under the heat. The barn seems to hold its breath, the silence punctuated only by the crackle of flame creeping closer.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(voice breaking)  
(Come on now... wake up!)  
She slips her arms under his,  
struggling inch by inch to drag him  
across the dirt floor. She stumbles  
through the thick smoke, gasping,  
eyes streaming. She reaches the  
barn door, grabs the handle, yanks  
and...it's locked tight.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)  
(tears falling, voice  
cracking)  
Jesus... please... please help me,  
Lord...

65

FADE TO: FLASHBACK - RIVERBANK - SUNSET

MIRIAM sits beside GRANDPA BLIND BILLY, staring out at the water, chin in her hand.

MIRIAM  
 (quietly, her voice  
 cracking)  
 I wish I could go through real  
 walls, Grandpa...I wish I could  
 walk through that bank vault, get  
 some money for Mama... so we don't  
 lose our home.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
 (sighing deep, voice low  
 like he talking to the  
 wind)  
 Sometimes life gon' box us in...  
 put up walls we cain't break down  
 with no fist nor foot. But the  
 Lord? He make a way clean through  
 that wall. He is all things...

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
 He everywhere. Ain't nothin' too  
 big, too far, or too hard for Him,  
 if you just trust Him.

66 BACK TO: INT. OLD BARN - NIGHT

MIRIAM, eyes filled with tears, lays her hand on the barn  
 wall. And it passes through. She gasps, eyes wide.

MIRIAM  
 (barely a whisper)  
 Lord... You with me?

She grabs hold of Chris, holding onto him tightly. And just  
 like that they vanish through the wall, bodies slipping out  
 of the barn like water through fingers.

67 EXT. TREE LINE - JUST BEYOND THE BARN - NIGHT

MIRIAM and CHRIS tumble out of the other side, landing hard  
 in the dirt. She coughs and gasps for breath, eyes watering.  
 Chris lies still beside her. She shakes him, desperate.

MIRIAM  
 C'mon... please...

But CHRIS doesn't move. Then she hears voices in the distance  
 coming toward them.

BOY #6 (O.S.)  
 Let's get outta here! My daddy's  
 going to skin me alive if he finds  
 out what we did!

Tires squeal as the truck turns around in the road. MIRIAM's face freezes in panic. She looks at Chris, then back toward the noise. She has no choice but to disappear into the dark woods like a shadow. Chris lies alone, the glow of fire reflecting in his open, dazed eyes.

68

EXT. NEAR EBENEZER SWAMP - NIGHT

UNCLE GARY stirs in the dirt, groaning, eyes bleary. He coughs, squints up at the thick plumes of smoke rising over the trees. The flicker of fire dances on his face. He sits up fast, panic rushing in.

UNCLE GARY  
 (shaking his head,  
 slurring)  
 Sh-shucks... the white devil done  
 come! Burnin' it all down—come to  
 kill us all!

He scrambles to his feet, stumbling, pants half-falling off his hips as he makes for the old swamp path.

UNCLE GARY (CONT'D)  
 (CONT'D)  
 (muttering, breathing  
 heavy)  
 I'm outta here, man... naw, naw...  
 I ain't never comin' back to this  
 cursed place.

His boots slap through the wet ground as he stumbles deeper into the swamp, breathing hard, sweat and liquor pouring off him.

UNCLE GARY (CONT'D)  
 (CONT'D)  
 (gasping)  
 Lawd... I almost died today. Swear  
 I did...

Then he hears a hiss and a low, guttural growl and freezes in his tracks. He slowly turns and behind him he sees a MASSIVE ALLIGATOR standing just a few feet away, half in shadow, mouth hanging open wide, eyes like glassy marbles.

UNCLE GARY (CONT'D)  
 (CONT'D)  
 (eyes wide open)  
 Oh-oh hell no...

He turns to run, but his foot catches a root and CRASH! He goes flying into the muddy water with a yelp. The alligator slithers forward, into the muddy edges of the water, and disappears beneath the surface after him. The water ripples. Then stills.

69 EXT. BURNIN' TOWN OF EBENEZER - NIGHT

Smoke pours thick through the air, twisting like ghosts through the trees. Flames roar behind the barn as the boys run wild-until panic hits.

BOY #1  
 (looking around  
 frantically)  
 Hey - where's CHRIS?

BUSH  
 (glancing around)  
 I... I don't know. I wasn't with him!

DRIVER BOY  
 (hollering over the noise)  
 Bush, can y'all go look for him? We don't have much time! We have to go, now!

BUSH and two others take off running, shouting through the smoke.

BUSH  
 CHRIS! CHRIS!

He stops in his tracks. Ahead he sees CHRIS motionless in the dirt, just a few feet from the barn. His face is streaked with soot, eyes fluttering, breath shallow, barely conscious.

BUSH (CONT'D)  
 (running to him)  
 Hey! CHRIS! Get up, man, we have to leave!

CHRIS coughs, blinking like he's trying to wake up from a dream.

CHRIS  
(groggy)  
Wh-where...?

BUSH  
What the hell happened to you?  
Where'd you go?

CHRIS  
(shaky)  
I... I don't know... Last thing I  
remember, I was locked inside the  
barn. It was burning...

BUSH  
(confused, glancing at the  
flames)  
What're you talkin' about? You're  
outside. Barn's right there.

CHRIS sits up slow, dazed, eyes unfocused.

CHRIS  
I don't know... I swear, I was  
inside.

BUSH  
(shaking his head)  
Forget it. Fires gettin' too big.  
C'mon, we we have to get outta here  
Before the law shows up.

The other guys who came with BUSH, all exchange nods and  
secret handshakes, eyes full of things they can't say.

BUSH (CONT'D)  
(quiet, steady)  
We don't speak on this. Not a word.  
Not now. Not ever.

The others nod in solemn agreement, their faces set-hardened  
by pride, fear, or something they won't name. BUSH yanks  
CHRIS up by the arm. The boys take off running, boots hitting  
gravel, breathing hard, hearts pounding. They pile into the  
truck and speed off, fear and laughter tangled in their  
throats. Behind them was Miriam's house, tucked quiet and  
still along the Pearl River. The fire never touched it.

70

EXT. MIRIAM'S GRANDPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The screen door slams open as MIRIAM bursts through, sobbing  
hard, breathing like she had just run a hundred miles.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY hears the cry and moves fast, arms outstretched.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
Lawd have mercy, Miriam! Baby,  
where you been? I been lookin' all  
over for ya! You alright?

MIRIAM  
(choking on tears)  
I was so scared, Grandpa... I ain't  
know if I was gon' make it...

He wraps her up tight, holding her close like he ain't never letting go again. He wipes her tears with them rough, gentle hands.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
(sniffing the air)  
What in the world? What's all this  
smoke out here?

MIRIAM  
(voice trembling)  
Ebenezer's on fire... I don't know  
what happened... But there was  
folks... wearin' them white hoods,  
like ghosts or somethin'. A whole  
mess of 'em.

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
(his arms tighten, voice  
low and heavy)  
Lord Jesus...

GRANDPA BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
(CONT'D)  
(tears welling)  
Baby girl... I don't care what  
happened out there so long as you  
home. Long as you safe.

71 INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - DAY

White DEPUTIES lounge around a worn table, coffee mugs in hand, legs propped up. A ceiling fan spins lazily overhead, barely stirring the thick air. The room carries the scent of stale tobacco and sweat.

DEPUTY #1  
Y'all hear about that fire out in  
Ebenezer? Whole row of shacks went  
up in smoke.

DEPUTY #2

You think we ought to head out there? Take a look?

SHERIFF

(drawling, disinterested)

Ain't no use. Those folks probably torched their own homes before they packed up. Town was set to be underwater anyhow. Whoever struck the match just saved the county the expense. Everyone's gone now, right?

DEPUTY #1

Far as I know - 'cept that colored girl in the holding cell. Her and her kin.

DEPUTY #3

Chief, what do you want to do about her? That trespassing charge isn't gonna stick much longer.

SHERIFF

(leans forward, voice gravelly)

She's been in there long enough. Scared the rest off, didn't it. Sometimes a couple nights in a cell's all it takes to remind folks where they stand. Go ahead and turn her loose.

72

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - DAY

KIARA JASMINE steps out the back of the station, clothes wrinkled, face tired but still proud. DEPUTY #3 walks behind her, holding the door.

DEPUTY #3

You're free to go, ma'am. But don't let us catch you trespassing again or you know damn well how this ends.

KIARA JASMINE

(turns, voice sharp but weary)

That's my house... my family house. Where you reckon I'm supposed to go?



DEPUTY #3

(shrugs)

First Baptist down the road,  
they're runnin' some kinda shelter  
for the ones from Ebenezer. You can  
try there.

KIARA JASMINE

(looking down, voice soft)

Reckon I ain't got much choice.  
Thank ya... officer.

She turns to leave.

DEPUTY #3

(calling out)

Ma'am... I am sorry. Sorry you  
gotta go through all this.

KIARA JASMINE

(half-turns, gives a  
small, bitter smile)

Hard world to live in... when you  
born a N-.

She stops herself, turns, and walks away.

73

EXT. GRANDPA'S HOUSE - DAY

KIARA JASMINE walks fast down the road, skirt catching in the  
breeze, eyes darting. She turns the corner and sees the  
porch.

KIARA JASMINE

MIRIAM! MIRIAM! BABY, WHERE YOU

74

AT?!

MIRIAM comes running from the porch, eyes wide, arms flying.

MIRIAM

Momma! I was so scared!

KIARA JASMINE

(grabs her tight)

Oh baby... what happened? What they  
do to you?

MIRIAM

(hesitating)

I... I don't wanna talk 'bout it...

KIARA JASMINE  
 You don't gotta, baby. Mama's here  
 now. We okay. We gon' be okay...

They hug tight, tears pouring, holding on like the wind could  
 tear 'em apart. GRANDPA BLIND BILLY sits in his rocker,  
 quiet, listening, heart heavy.

                  KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)  
                   (softly, but firmly)  
 Miriam, baby... we gotta go.

                  MIRIAM  
                   (confused)  
 Go? Where we goin'?

                  KIARA JASMINE  
 I dunno, sugar. But we can't stay  
 here no more. It ain't safe.

                  KIARA JASMINE (CONT'D)  
                   (turns to her father)  
 Daddy, go on an' pack your things.  
 We leavin'.

                  GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
                   (shakes his head, calm but  
                   firm)  
 I ain't leavin'. This house, this  
 dirt... it all I know. I'm blind,  
 KIARA JASMINE. This here my whole  
 world.

                  KIARA JASMINE  
 No, Daddy, you gotta come. The  
 whole town got burned down. And  
 They done built that dam, and when  
 the next big rain come, it's gon'  
 flood out everythin'. You stayin'  
 here, it's like waitin' to drown.

                  GRANDPA BLIND BILLY  
                   (slow and sure)  
 I ain't choose where I was born...  
 but I can choose where I die.

                  KIARA JASMINE  
                   (tears catch in her  
                   throat)  
 Fine... but we ain't sayin'  
 goodbye. Me an' Miriam, we gon' go  
 find that shelter. And soon as we  
 get settled... we comin' back for  
 you.

MIRIAM grips her mama's hand as they start walking.

75 GRANDPA

BLIND BILLY sits still on the porch, listening to their footsteps fade... Crying and holding his own kind of prayer in the silence.

76 EXT. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

A modest brick church glows warm in the cool night air. The sound of children laughing echoes faint from around back. A cross glimmers in the light of a hanging porch lamp.

KIARA JASMINE and MIRIAM walk up slow, clothes wrinkled, carrying all they own in a worn-out suitcase and a paper sack. Weariness settles over them both, thick and unspoken.

KIARA JASMINE  
(to the shelter worker at  
the door)  
Excuse me, ma'am... this where  
folks from Ebenezer s'posed to  
come?

CHURCH VOLUNTEER  
(kind-eyed, warm smile)  
Yes ma'am, you're in the right  
place. Y'all come on in, make  
yourselves at home.

KIARA JASMINE  
(relieved but wary)  
How long we allowed to stay? It's  
just me and my baby girl. I'ma try  
and go back for my daddy.

CHURCH VOLUNTEER  
(gently patting KIARA  
JASMINE's back)  
You stay as long as you need,  
honey. We're going to help you get  
back on your feet, find work, and  
maybe even a place to call your  
own.

MIRIAM  
(eyes lighting up)  
Mama, I see my friends! Can I go  
play with 'em?

KIARA JASMINE  
 (glancing at the  
 volunteer)  
 That alright?

CHURCH VOLUNTEER  
 Of course it is, sweet pea. Go on  
 and be a child while you can.

MIRIAM takes off running, joy spilling outta her for the first time in days. The volunteer turns back to KIARA JASMINE, her voice soft.

CHURCH VOLUNTEER (CONT'D)  
 (sadly)  
 We're real sorry 'bout what  
 happened to Ebenezer. That  
 shouldn't'a never happened. But we  
 here now... to help however we can.

KIARA JASMINE  
 (tears welling up)  
 Thank you. Y'all don't know what  
 this means. You a blessin', truly.

77 EXT. EBENEZER - NIGHT

Rain pours down like judgment from the sky. The Pearl River swells, angry and fast. Trees bend. Mud slides.

78 INT. SHELTER ROOM - NIGHT

KIARA JASMINE paces, wringing her hands, eyes on the door as thunder cracks.

KIARA JASMINE  
 (running up to the  
 volunteer)  
 Please... please call the police.  
 My daddy still back in Ebenezer. He  
 blind - he ain't gon' know if that  
 water come for him.

CHURCH VOLUNTEER  
 (nodding)  
 Alright, honey. I'll call right  
 now. Just stay calm.

79 INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A phone rings on a cluttered desk. Papers, coffee-stained maps, and half-filled forms lie scattered beneath a flickering desk lamp. The DISPATCHER, a weary white man in uniform, lifts the receiver without looking up just as lightning flashes through the window, followed by a low, rolling thunder.

POLICE DISPATCHER

(into phone)

I'm sorry, ma'am, but we can't send anybody out there right now. The back roads are flooded and trees are down all over. It's too dangerous. We'll try in the morning.

He hangs up, quiet, and stares at the rain pounding the window.

80 EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A wild storm tears through the trees along the Pearl River. The wind howls like it's lost its mind. Lightning cracks across the sky, illuminating the sagging frame of a weather-beaten shotgun house. Thunder rumbles low and mean, shaking the earth beneath. Rain lashes the tin roof, furious and relentless like a thousand angry fists.

81 INT. BLIND BILLY'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Inside, it's dim and still, save for the storm's fury and the gentle strum of a guitar.

BLIND BILLY, late 80s, blind, his skin worn like river driftwood, sits in a crooked chair by the window. He doesn't flinch. His fingers move across the strings—slow, certain, steady. He sings in a voice shaped by time, thick with smoke and sorrow.

BLIND BILLY

(singing)

"I live down by dat Pearl  
River...I's blind, but I still play  
my blues...They say I's Black...But  
I ain't never seen color... so what  
it mean to me?"

Outside, a towering old tree groans beneath the lash of the wind. Its limbs are twisting, straining, ready to break. Lightning flashes, splitting the sky wide open.

82

INT. BLIND BILLY'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

BLIND BILLY doesn't blink. He just keeps strumming—slow, steady—like he's playing against the storm itself. A quiet battle between man and nature, fought in chords and memory.

BLIND BILLY

(still singing)

"Folks say White man stole my song...Heard it playin' on that big city radio...Well, I'm glad it's out there...'Cause I cain't go nowhere...I's just a blind man...A Mississippi blues man..."

CRACK! BOOM! The tree outside splits clean in two. A huge branch crashes through the front window, shattering glass. Wind rips through the room, scattering old papers, knocking over a picture frame. Outta the storm, a tiny HUMMINGBIRD flits through the busted window. Wings beating like tiny drums, it circles the room, fighting the wind and lighting. BLIND BILLY doesn't stop. It's as though he knew it was coming. The little bird flutters around him, then settles gently on top his head.

The river water creeps in through the cracks in the floor. First just a trickle... then a rush. It soaks into BLIND BILLY's worn boots. But he doesn't move. Still playing. Still humming.

BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(softly now, almost talking to himself)

"My mama used to say...'Baby, I's sorry you come out blind...I ain't eat much back then...'But I told her, 'It's alright...I's blessed... I can make music..."

BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(smiles a little as he sings)

"Met my wife 'cause I was blind...She was too...But that river done took her from me...Left me with my lil' girl... my grandbaby... Folks say she's pretty. I got a son too...But I don't talk 'bout him..."

The water's rising fast now. Up past his knees. The floorboards bend, groan, and give way beneath him. His guitar starts to float, but his hands hold on.

The strings go quiet, muffled as they dip below the surface. For the first time in his life, he slowly opens his clouded eyes – milky white, like snow.

Then – a miracle.

His pupils shift. The whiteness fades. His eyes turn dark. Alive. Human. Seeing.

He gasps softly.

For the first time, he sees color through his own eyes.

BLIND BILLY (CONT'D)  
(whispers, in awe)  
It's so beautiful...Thank you,  
Lord.

A single tear rolls down his cheek. He exhales his final breath. The HUMMINGBIRD lifts off, wings buzzing, floating back out into the storm. The house creaks... then goes still.

83 EXT. BLIND BILLY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The floodwaters swallow the house whole. The HUMMINGBIRD flutters out of the broken window, dodging raindrops, beating its tiny wings with all its might. The storm fights against it. The wind tries to drag it down. But the bird climbs higher. Higher... Above the trees, above the Pearl River Valley, above the black storm clouds.Until-It BREAKS THROUGH into the open sky.

84 EXT. SKY ABOVE THE STORM - NIGHT

Above the storm, the world is silent. The night sky stretches endless above the clouds. The stars shine brilliantly. The moon casts a soft glow, as peaceful as heaven itself. The HUMMINGBIRD drifts weightlessly, gliding in the tranquil air. It soars, carried by an unseen force-free. As if BLIND BILLY's spirit rides with it.

85 EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING THE FLOODED TOWN - MOMENTS LATER

The storm subsides. Volunteers and police arrive with KIARA JASMINE and MIRIAM. Where Ebenezer once stood, only a vast reservoir remains.

MIRIAM and KIARA JASMINE, soaked and breathless, reach the top of the bank. Below, the drowned town of Ebenezer is swallowed in muddy current.

A few WEALTHY WHITE TOWNSFOLK stand under umbrellas, sipping drinks. Watching like it's a picnic.

Miriam drops to her knees.

                    KIARA JASMINE  
                    (screaming)  
            Daddy!

                    MIRIAM  
                    (screaming)  
            Grandpa!!

KIARA JASMINE collapses beside her, clutching Miriam's hand. Their cries echo into the sky.

86           MONTAGE - BLACK & WHITE 8MM FILM FOOTAGE (MEMORY SEQUENCE)

- A BLIND BABY (YOUNG BLIND BILLY) gropes for a guitar. As a boy, he strums his first tune, feeling the strings with wonder. Marries a BLIND WOMAN. They dance slowly, laughing. Holds their newborn child, KIARA JASMINE. Singing in a smoky blues bar. In the back, a group of WHITE MUSICIANS scribble down his lyrics. Fishing with a young MIRIAM on the banks of the Pearl River.

The flickering black-and-white footage begins to distort... melt... burn.

The image curls, warps, and dissolves.

Silence.

End of Part 1

INTERMISSION