



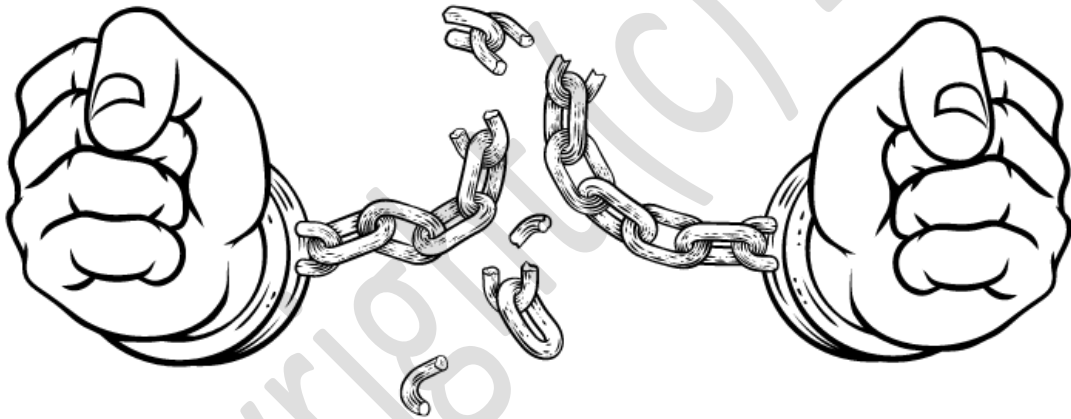
Free Sample

Presented By:

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Houston, Texas (USA)

CHAPTER 1: Enslaved and Abused



“Get your lazy ass up, nigger! We still have four hours of sunlight left for some good pickings!” Master Lats’ words echoed inside Asher’s head, adding to the dizziness he was experiencing – a symptom of the heat stroke he was having at that moment. Particles of dirt pummeled Asher’s face as the horse his master was riding shuffled its hooves right next to his head. He laid there and stared up into the ball of hot mass known as the sun. Suddenly, Asher felt nauseous, and, without warning, he vomited up the hotcakes he had for breakfast. “Ah, shit! Roll his ass over! Remus, carry your black ass over to that trough, fetch some water, and clean Asher up. Tend to him now...and then get back to picking that cotton!”

“Yes, Master Lats, sir!” Remus replied wearily. He hurried over to the trough and back after soaking a piece of ripped shirt in cool water. He then wiped the vomit from Asher’s face and helped him up into a sitting position.

Fatigue was wearing on Asher and had been for the last six years of his enslavement. He will never forget being ripped from his wife’s arms as they both were auctioned off to the highest bidder. “Master don’t appreciate us, Remus. I tell you: I ain’t gonna take much more of this,” Asher said weakly. He then gagged and coughed, which was followed by the remaining contents of his stomach coming up.

Remus was older than Asher—41 years old to be exact—and had known Master Lats since being delivered from his mother’s womb. He lived on a happy-go-lucky plantation that he would never dream of running away from and thought it foolish talk every time Asher brought up the topic. “Now, now. You’re talking nonsense again. Let’s get you on your feet so we can get you some water and cleaned up. Master Lats expects you to be a good, hard-working nigger and finish your work for the day.”

As he stood erect, Asher felt faint. He was a great physical specimen of a man, standing at 6’3” and ripped with muscles from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. His smooth, dark skin was always shiny with sweat and drew constant stares from Mrs. Lats and the other flirtatious White women. Every chance she had, Mrs. Lats would run her fingers through Asher’s footlong dreadlocks, each time telling him, “The nappy coarseness of your hair makes me wet.” (That, of course, was done when Mr. Lats was

away on business in town.) Asher refused to entertain Mrs. Lats' advances...although her touch gave him an erection every single time.

As a slave, Asher excelled in every way possible on the plantation, even going so far as to teach other slaves how to read and write. Had they been caught, a beating would surely follow.

The walk to their slave quarters wasn't far from where Asher and Remus stood. In fact, Master Lats designed the property with the slaves' quarters housed between the main house and the cotton fields. As they walked, mud squeezed through Asher's toes, reminding him of his conditions that were considered unfit for horses and other cattle. THEY enjoyed plush green pastures and troughs filled daily with fresh water poured by none other than the slaves.

The grounds surrounding Asher's living quarters didn't grow any green vegetation, and that was by design. Master Lats didn't want the niggers gaining any extra strength from naturally-grown herbs! "You niggers only deserve enough sustenance to fulfill your work duties," Master Lats constantly yelled at his "property" — three men slaves, Leah (the lone negro female), and two young boys named Dan and Ham. Months prior, Leah gave birth to a baby girl, but that child was immediately taken and auctioned off because Master Lats only wanted male-born slaves on his plantation. He couldn't care less that Leah's heart left the day her daughter was sold.

Once inside his hut, Asher ripped off his shirt as Remus quickly returned to work. Since his strength was returning, he knew he wouldn't be excused from work for the day just because he fainted under the hot Georgia summer sun. He slung the soiled shirt into the wash pile, wiped his face with his washcloth, and then rinsed his mouth, trying to erase the unwanted taste of his bodily fluids from his tastebuds. "Dear Lord, why?" he whispered into the quiet of the hut.

His eyes were then drawn to the loose plank in the corner near the west wall that faced Master Lats' house. Underneath were plans that Asher had been putting together for his attempt at gaining freedom. All he needed to

do was make it to the Underground Railroad to secure his run to the north, where he has heard of life-changing experiences.

Asher's thoughts were disturbed by her sudden presence. Much like other times, he felt Mrs. Lats staring at him. Almost simultaneously, he heard Master Lats' horse neigh and knew his time in the hut was coming to an abrupt end. Under the watchful, lustful eyes of Mrs. Lats, Asher finished cleaning himself up and prepared to return to work. "Not much longer now," he thought to himself as he stepped back into the sun. Immediately, the sun's rays drowned his body with moisture. As he walked toward his cotton bag, he thought about how he amazingly recovered from any element faster than any slave Master Lats owned.

Remus was picking his roll, trying not to be noticed. Asher noticed how the older man's eyes darted back and forth nervously. Secretly, Asher always thought Remus was a coward who never displayed a dislike for his confinement. With Remus already in his 40s, he likely accepted his fate and perhaps even prayed for death from time to time.

The bell rang, signifying it was time for devotion. That was when Master Lats read from the Bible and told stories from the past – inspirational tales that he said, "Will help y'all be the best nigger servants as to the Lord!" That confused Asher because he interprets God's Word differently. Asher knew he was a natural-born leader backed by dreams and other signs such as the fire deep within to be free.

"Alright. Get on over here for today's readings," Master Lats commanded. They gathered under the giant oak tree near the rear corner of the main house. Asher hated sitting under that tree, especially after a rebellious slave named Willie was hung from one of its massive branches the day Asher arrived at the plantation. Asher still remembered the angry look on Willie's face as Master Lats and his neighbors watched him kick helplessly until he took his last breath. Asher constantly told Remus and the others that the ground was cursed. Each slave sat in the carved-out wooden chairs that Asher made. From left to right sat Asher, Remus, Rambo, Leah, Dan, and Ham – all feeling like they had no self-dignity.

Master Lats' lesson was from the Old Testament Book of Jeremiah — the man known as "The Weeping Prophet" because God allowed him to see and feel what it was like to be held in captivity, along with the people of Israel. Jeremiah was a man of God who Asher could relate to, but taking his enslavement lying down was unacceptable! In Asher's mind, he didn't plan to meekly allow Master Lats to continue his abusive ways. The words of God sometimes appeared to Asher in the sky in the form of a cloud. Although he could see God through His creation, he couldn't understand fully the level of separation from Him that he often felt.

Master Lats began: "In Chapter 18, the Lord said to Jeremiah, 'Why can't I mold them like the potter works on this pot?'" Asher knew the story and understood that God was trying to shape Israel into His people. God wanted Israel to be an example of how men and women were supposed to live by His laws, but the people rejected the Lord — and Asher could not understand why! From what he had read, God would answer their prayers — as long as they walked in God's will. As Master Lats taught, Asher studied the hypocritical man. He thought, "How can someone read God's Word daily yet live an evil lifestyle?"

Ham — the youngest of the boys — stood during the lesson, leaning over and resting his head on Leah's lap. The six-year-old boy was recovering from his first beating, where he received ten lashes for not picking his quota of ten pounds of cotton per day. To help with his healing, Leah wiped his sores with a natural African herb mixture that was taught to her by her mom (and was passed down from generation to generation).

Asher drifted in and out of sleep during the lesson. He still felt queasy and desperately needed to rest. "I must be boring to you, boy!" Master Lats sneered. He then slammed the Bible shut, slung it onto a hay top wood table, yanked the brown leather whip from his side, and stood with evil intent in his eyes. "Since I can't seem to hold your attention, get your ass up on the tree!" Asher remained seated, wanting to buck but knew if he didn't comply, every slave in Master Lats' sight would face the same punishment. "Get to the tree, nigger!" Lats hollered. Ham immediately began screaming and reached for the safety of Leah's arms. "Shush that little nigger, or he'll be

next!” Master Lats hissed. Leah did as she was told, especially after seeing the venomous spittle drip from Master Lats’ mouth.

Mindful of the others’ fate, Asher hugged the oak tree and prepared for each malicious strike headed his way. He clenched his teeth, vowing never to let that White man take his human spirit. The first strike of the whip came as it always did – with a sting ten times worse than any bee sting.

“You thought you could fake me out with that little display of acting, huh?” Master raised the whip and brought it down with all his might. The leather strips reopened an old wound. “How long did you plan on faking that heatstroke?” Lats asked as he dished out several more lethal strikes.

Leah sobbed quietly and covered Ham’s young eyes. Still, he shook and cringed with the sound of each blow. Dan hid behind his mom and held his brother’s shaky hand.

Asher took his whipping, all while knowing the time was near when he would put his plan into action...

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