Margaret Garner Draft

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MARGARET GARNER

Act I

Scene I: k

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Classic formula from of
the bs story include flat)
Stock characters of lost
muster; cruel oner sur,
in n rent stavis. Un
layered their motives are

ble on stage; they are shackled

SLAVES

AIN...

NO! NO MORE! NO! NOT MORE!

MARGARET

... SKIN BROKEN BY A CANE ...

SLAVES

NO! NO MORE!

MARGARET

...BLOODY PILLOWS UNDER MY HEAD ...

SLAVES

OH NO! NO MORE! PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

MARGARET GARNER

Act I

Scene I: Kentucky, April 1856.

Out of the darkness, a group of slaves gradually becomes visible on stage; they are shackled or locked in cages on a large trading block.

SLAVES

NO! NO MORE! NO! NOT MORE! PLEASE GOD, NO MORE! NOT IN OUR LIFETIME!

MARGARET

... ANKLES CIRCLED WITH A CHAIN ...

SLAVES

NO! NO MORE! NO! NOT MORE!

MARGARET

... SKIN BROKEN BY A CANE ...

SLAVES

NO! NO MORE!

MARGARET

...BLOODY PILLOWS UNDER MY HEAD...

SLAVES

OH NO! NO MORE! PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

MARGARET

...WISHING, PRAYING I WAS DEAD ...

SLAVES

NO. NO. NO MORE! PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

MARGARET

BLOODY PILLOWS UNDER MY HEAD WISHING, PRAYING I WAS DEAD.

SLAVES

PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

MARGARET

MASTER'S BRAND IS BURNING ON ME ROPES CAN SWING FROM ANY OAK TREE

SLAVES

PLEASE GOD, NO MORE! PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

A change in lighting transforms the scene into one depicting a bustling townsquare, with a church visible in the distance. A group of TOWNSPEOPLE is gathering for a slave auction. They display a small-town mentality: familiar with everyone else's daily life and business, they love to gossip and at times are judgmental of others.

AUCTIONEER

BY THE POWERS INVESTED
AND BY CUSTOM INGESTED
I HEREBY DECLARE AND ALLOW
THE SALE OF ALL GOODS
AND CATTLE AND WOODLAND
SLAVES AND PLANTING FIELDS
DARK WITH LOAM.

I HEREBY DECLARE AND ALLOW AN OLD ESTATE RICH IN HISTORY IS NOW ON THE MARKET FOR A GENTLEMAN'S POCKET. A PRIZE IN THE WHOLE COUNTY ...

YOUR SHREWD EYES WILL LIGHT UP
YOUR BIDS ARE INVITED
DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR
POUND FOR POUND
THE BESTEST VALUE FOR MILES AROUND.

(In preparation for their sale at auction, members of slave families are separated from one another. They are divided by gender and age, into groups of men, boys, women, and young girls.)

TOWNSPEOPLE

HOW MUCH? HOW MUCH?
FOR PICKNIES AND MAMMIES AND BREEDERS AND BUCKS?
HOW MUCH? HOW MUCH?
HOW MUCH?

O WHAT A PROBLEM TO DECIDE
O WHAT A BURDEN ON OUR SHOULDERS.
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING,
ARE NOTHING, DO NOTHING, KNOW NOTHING
EXCEPT FOR WE WHO CLOTHE THEM AND FEED THEM
LET THEM SLEEP WHEN THEY ARE ILL
WE TEACH ALL THEY WILL EVER KNOW
OF GOD AND WORK AND HOME.

AUCTIONEER

BY THE POWERS INVESTED AND BY CUSTOM INGESTED I HEREBY DECLARE AND ALLOW THIS SALE TO BE NOW OPEN!

tr?

TOWNSPEOPLE

WHAT SAY? WHAT SAY?
FOR MILKING AND PLOWING
AND SPINNING AND CANNING AND SUCH.

HOW MUCH? HOW MUCH?
FOR PICKNIES AND MAMMIES AND BREEDERS AND BUCKS?
WHO KNOW NOTHING OF GOD AND HOME!

AUCTIONEER

(bringing forth the first slave for sale)

NOW THIS HERE IS CILLA.
ABOUT FIFTY, SHE THINKS.
A COOK, CHILD NURSE, LAUNDRY AND SEAMSTRESS.

THIS BID BEGINS AT TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS.
DO I HEAR TWO FORTY, TWO FORTY?
I NEED TWO FORTY.

TOWNSPEOPLE (emphatically)

TWO FORTY!

AUCTIONEER

TWO HUNDRED FORTY.

DO I HEAR THREE HUNDRED, THREE HUNDRED?

I NEED THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

TOWNSPEOPLE (enthusiastically)

THREE HUNDRED!

AUCTIONEER

THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

I NEED FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS...

TOWNSPEOPLE

...FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS!

EDWARD

(impatient, forcefully)

HOLD ON! HOLD ON!
I'M TELLING YOU TO HOLD ON!

TOWNSPEOPLE

(startled, a little nervous)

WHO IS IT? WHAT IS IT? WHO IS IT? WHAT IS IT?

AUCTIONEER

(polite, but annoyed)

EXCUSE ME, SIR.

LEGAL BUSINESS IS IN PROGRESS HERE.

BY THE POWERS INVESTED,

BY THE CUSTOM INGESTED...

EDWARD

(courteously interrupting the auctioneer)

... I BEG YOUR PARDON!

THIS FARM BELONGED TO MY BROTHER. IT CAN'T BE SOLD TO ANOTHER.

AUCTIONEER

IT IS TRUE.

IF A FAMILY MEMBER CALLS THE CLAIM
NO SALE CAN TAKE PLACE HERE OR NOW.

EDWARD

I AM GAINES. EDWARD GAINES. BROTHER OF THE DECEASED.

EDWARD

(increduously, almost pleading)

DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?

Towns people reaction here?

TOWNSPEOPLE

(somewhat agitated, their curiosity aroused)

EDWARD GAINES? WHO IS HE? DID OLD GAINES HAVE A BROTHER? EDWARD GAINES? WHO IS HE?

EDWARD

I WAS BORN AMONG YOU.
AND NOW I'VE RETURNED.
DOESN'T ANYONE REMEMBER ME?

TOWNSPEOPLE

NO. NO. NO. NO. WAS IT A LONG TIME AGO?

EDWARD

YOU THOUGHT I WAS LOST, DIDN'T YOU?
IN A ROUGH LIFE OF THE GAME?
YOU WERE WRONG.
WELL NO, YOU WEREN'T ... (sotto voce)
WELL YES, YOU WERE!

I WAS JUST A BOY
WHEN ANY OF YOU LAST SAW ME.
BUT I'VE BEEN HAPPILY MARRIED
WITH A DAUGHTER WE BOTH ADORED.
NOW I'M A WIDOWER, A MAN WITH MEANS,
A FATHER WITH A CHILD TO RAISE.

WHAT MY BROTHER OWNED
I HAVE RIGHT OF FIRST OFFER TO BUY.
WHICH I DO NOW, FRIENDS.
WHICH I DO NOW.

AUCTIONEER

IT IS TRUE.
IT IS THE LAW.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(echoing the AUCTIONEER)

IT IS TRUE. IT IS TRUE. IT IS TRUE. IT IS TRUE.

AUCTIONEER

WE MUST ENTERTAIN HIS RIGHT UNDER THE LAW.

(to EDWARD)

WHAT IS YOUR PLEASURE, MR.GAINES, SIR? WHAT PARTS INTEREST YOU?

EDWARD

I WANT IT ALL.
I'LL HAVE IT ALL.
EVERY STICK EVERY BARREL
EVERY BOX OF CHINA TEA BELONGS TO ME.
EVERY BODY EVERY BROOM
EVERY MULE EVERY LOOM.

(pointing at the slaves)
KEEP ALL THE GOODS AND PROPERTY TOGETHER.
I'LL BUY IT ALL.

(GAINES negotiates his contract with the AUCTIONEER [Stage Left]. Although the TOWNSPEOPLE begin to disperse, several prominent businessmen remain to witness the legal transaction.

(The slave families, allowed to stay together thanks to GAINES's generosity, celebrate in dance and song. However, their movements suggest, abstractly, bars of detention.)

CHORUS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHORUS

A LITTLE MORE TIME
A LITTLE MORE TIME
MORE TIME WITH THE CHILDREN WE LOVE...

(tenor soloist)
...TIME WITH OUR BROTHERS...

(all) ...WE FEEL THE MERCY OF OUR LORD GOD WITH THE GRACE OF A LITTLE MORE TIME.

CILLA and MARGARET

ANOTHER SEASON OF FRIENDSHIP TELLING STORIES, SHARING SECRETS BY THE FIRE.

CHORUS

WE FEEL THE MERCY OF OUR LORD GOD WITH THE GRACE OF A LITTLE MORE TIME.

MARGARET

MORE NIGHTS TO CURL LIKE A VINE IN OUR HUSBANDS' ARMS

ROBERT

MORE DAYS TO BASK IN THE LIGHT OF OUR LOVERS' EYES ...

CILLA and MARGARET

OUR FATHERS' GRAVES WE CAN STILL ATTEND

ALL

WITH SWEET WILLIAM AND COLUMBINE

CHORUS

A LITTLE MORE TIME A LITTLE MORE TIME MORE TIME WITH THE CHILDREN WE LOVE...

(mezzo-sopranos)
...TIME WITH OUR MOTHERS...

(all)

WE FEEL THE MERCY OF OUR LORD GOD WITH THE GRACE OF A LITTLE MORE TIME.

MARGARET

I MADE A LITTLE PLAY DOLL FOR MY BABY WITH BUTTON EYES AND HAIR OF YARN; THE LIPS ARE MADE OF ROSE-COLORED THREAD.

(Distracted, GAINES turns around and notices MARGARET. He is intrigued, and grateful for the good fortune to have just purchased her.)

ONE DAY SHE WILL LOVE IT I AM WAITING FOR HER TO LOVE IT

(GAINES resumes his negotiations.)

WHEN SHE IS OLD ENOUGH TO HOLD IT I'M WAITING FOR THIS MYSTERY CALLED CHILD.

ALL

A LITTLE MORE TIME
A LITTLE MORE TIME
MORE TIME WITH THE CHILDREN WE LOVE...

(tenors)

...TIME WITH OUR BROTHERS...

(all)

...WE FEEL THE BREATH OF OUR LORD GOD WITH THE GIFT OF A LITTLE MORE TIME

(softer)

WE FEEL THE BREATH OF OUR LORD GOD WITH THE GIFT OF A LITTLE MORE TIME...

(ending quietly)

(To the accompaniment of soft instrumental music, the SLAVES slowly exit Stage Right.)

(After completing his transaction with GAINES, the AUCTIONEER departs Stage Left with the prominent businessmen.)

(Upon finishing her song, MARGARET unties her neck scarf and wraps it around a pole. She then exits Stage Right, the last of the SLAVES to leave.)

EDWARD

(watching the last of the townspeople leave)

LOOK AT THEM.
THEY WERE MY NEIGHBORS ONCE.
THEY LIE.
THEY PRETEND THEY DON'T REMEMBER ME.

CASEY

IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, SIR. YOU'VE BEEN AWAY FOR TWENTY YEARS...

EDWARD

(turning back around)

...TWENTY YEARS. (as an aside)

THEY PRETEND. THEY LIE.
THEY SAY THEY DON'T REMEMBER ME.

(MARGARET's scarf, tied to a pole, catches GAINES's attention; he starts walking toward it.)

CASEY

SOMETHING IN THE PAST, SIR? SOMETHING BEST FORGOTTEN?

EDWARD

(taking MARGARET's scarf from the pole)

I WAS JUST A BOY.
THE TROUBLE I CAUSED WAS INESCAPABLE.
FOR A BOY ...
A BOY WITH AN APPETITE.

CASEY

BUT EVERY BOY HAS AN APPETITE, SIR.

EDWARD

I LEFT UNDER A CLOUD OF SUSPICION.
IT WAS NOTHING, NOTHING TO RAISE EYEBROWS.
THE GIRL WAS SO YOUNG,
AND FROM SUCH A FINE FAMILY;
THINGS GOT A LITTLE OUT OF HAND.

SO NOW THEY PRETEND
NEITHER I NOR IT EVER HAPPENED.
WHAT A SHAME ...
I REMEMBER!
I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

EDWARD

(wistful, yet still optimistic)

I REMEMBER EVERYTHING ...

I REMEMBER THE CURVE [shape?] OF EVERY HILL
THE SWANS IN THE POND
I REMEMBER IT STILL.

I REMEMBER EVERY TREE MAPLE, BIRCH, WILLOWS AND PINE

I CAN SEE THEM NOW
SHADING THE DRIVE
SHELT'RING ME FROM THE HEAT.
MAPLE, BIRCH AND THE ODOR OF PINE

I REMEMBER EVERY TREE BUT NONE OF THEM REMEMBERS ME.

THE WELL, THE CREEK
FISHING BY A LAKE.
EVENINGS OF LAUGHTER
WITH GIRLS WHO WANTED TO PLAY.

I REMEMBER EVERY TREE BUT NONE OF THEM REMEMBERS ME.

THEY WON'T FORGET ME AGAIN!

(EDWARD and CASEY leave.)

End of Scene One

the

[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE I]

Orchestral Interlude I is pure rhythm: intensely energetic, almost hard-edged staccato figures played by the orchestra's percussionists. These rhythmic motives lead organically into the opera's second scene, during which we see the slaves making music upon their own plantation work implements and domestic goods, as well as singing animated work songs when coming home from a day's labor in the distant fields.

During the opera's Orchestral Interludes, atmospheric period photos of Southern plantations or historical sites (pre-Civil War, c. 1850) will be projected onto scrim(s) to enhance the sense of "time once removed." If any people are seen in these photos, their facial features must not be distinguishable; they are to be considered "props," not individuals or characters.

1858 ?

Scene iii: EDWARD GAINES's parlor, in early summer 1857.

An engagement party is taking place to celebrate the betrothal of CAROLINE GAINES, Edward's daughter, to GEORGE HANCOCK. The guests – the local townspeople whom Edward is very eager to impress -- waltz to the gentle accompaniment of a piano and violin. Although MARGARET is dressed more nicely now, in the uniform befitting a house servant, she acts in a more subjugated manner.

EDWARD

(to the GUESTS)

PLEASE. MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION?

(the GUESTS gather around)

(Arioso)

EDWARD

I PROMISED CAROLINE'S MOTHER TWO THINGS. ONE, THAT I WOULD STAY A WIDOWER. TWO, THAT I WOULD SEE TO OUR DAUGHTER'S FUTURE CARE. CAROLINE HAS PROVEN THE RIGHTNESS OF THOSE PROMISES. SHE WILL INHERIT A SOUND ESTATE-WHICH, I MIGHT ADD, HAS GROWN FROM MODEST TO GRAI THANKS TO ME. AND HER CHOICE OF HUSBAND IS EVERYTHING HER MOTHER WISHED FOR. A MAN OF STATURE AND LEARNING

CAROLINE

AND YOU, FATHER?
IS HE WHAT YOU HAVE WISHED FOR

EDWARD

EXACTLY SO. PRECISELY SO. AM I RIGHT, GEORGE?

it can cloud the mind I've clouds

1858 ?,

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(the GUESTS gather around)

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CAROLINE

AND YOU, FATHER?
IS HE WHAT YOU HAVE WISHED FOR ME?

EDWARD

EXACTLY SO. PRECISELY SO. AM I RIGHT, GEORGE?

GEORGE

I AM NOT SURE
THAT I DESERVE HER,
BUT I WILL SPEND MY LIFE
TRYING TO SERVE HER
AND EARN THE DEVOTION
SHE SQUANDERS ON ME.

EDWARD

WELL PUT, SON.
CAROLINE, MY ADORABLE CAROLINE.
GIVE YOUR FATHER
A DAUGHTER'S EMBRACE.

(EDWARD clutches CAROLINE too tightly while embracing her.)

CAROLINE (laughing)

OH, FATHER. I CANNOT BREATHE.

EDWARD

FORGIVE ME.
MY ARMS ARE LIKE MY LOVE.
STRONG AND ALL EMBRACING.

CAROLINE

NEVER MIND, FATHER.

I HAVE PROSPERED

SO MUCH IN YOUR ARMS
I CAN NOW EMBRACE ANOTHER.

(turns to GEORGE)

GEORGE

THERE IS NO RIVAL HERE.
LOVE DOES NOT CONQUER OR DISPOSE.
IT DOUBLES AND TRIPLES WITH USE.

EDWARD

I AGREE. LIKE MONEY IN THE BANK.

GEORGE

OH, NO, SIR.
LOVE IS AN OCEAN
BREAKING INTO RIVERS;
THOSE RIVERS
BREAKING INTO STREAMS.

EDWARD

WATCH OUT! HE WILL DROWN YOU, DAUGHTER.

CAROLINE

ALL WILLINGLY ...
WILLINGLY, WILL I SWIM
IN HIS SEA OF LOVE.
AIR MEANS NOTHING TO ME
WITHOUT HIM.

EDWARD

A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE GASPING FOR AIR.

(mimicking CAROLINE)

'I CAN'T BREATHE!'

NOW YOU TRADE IT FOR WATER. YOUR CONFUSION DISTURBS ME, DAUGHTER.

GEORGE

SHE NEEDS BOTH, SIR.
AS ALL LIFE DOES:
AIR AND WATER.
NO RIVALRY THERE.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IS ALWAYS CONFUSING.
IT CAN NEVER BE AS CLEAR
AS THE EMOTION IT TRIES TO CONVEY.
THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE ...

EDWARD

...IS AN IMPOSTER! HIDING IN DRESSES OF VERSE...

GEORGE

...IS A MAGICIAN! TURNING ROSES INTO DOVES ON THE WING...

EDWARD

...IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE...

CAROLINE

...A RAFT IN A STORMY SEA, OFFERING RESCUE...

GEORGE

...A LIGHT HOUSE TO GUIDE US OVER HEAVY WAVES...

EDWARD

...A THIEF RESPECTING NO HOUSEHOLD, STEALING THE LOVED ONES AWAY...

CAROLINE

A CLIPPER SHIP
WITH ROOM AFTER ROOM AFTER ROOM
FOR DANCING!
FOR CAKES AND TEA...
AND CHAMPAGNE!

(MARGARET enters with a tray of glasses.)

EDWARD

WELL THAT IS OUR ANSWER, THEN.
CHAMPAGNE HEALS ALL WOUNDS
AND PUTS ARGUMENT TO BED.
CONGRATULATIONS, SON.
BLESSINGS, DAUGHTER.

(He drinks a toast to the couple as MARGARET serves the GUESTS.)

CAROLINE

MARGARET. WAIT A MOMENT. COME TO ME. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

MARGARET

EXCUSE ME? MAM?

CAROLINE

WHAT DO YOU THINK
ABOUT LOVE?
WE WERE DISCUSSING
THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE IT.
DO THEY HELP US TO LOVE
OR HURT US BEYOND REPAIR?

EDWARD (warning)

CHILD! DEAR CHILD!

GUESTS (alarmed)

OH DEAR.
WE THOUGHT HE WAS QUALITY.
THIS IS A MISTAKE
QUALITY FOLK WOULD NEVER MAKE.
A PROFOUND INSULT.
WHAT KIND OF HOUSE DOES HE RUN?
WE DON'T BEHAVE THIS WAY!

CAROLINE

I WANT TO KNOW.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHE THINKS.

EDWARD

CAROLINE, YOU ARE TOO WILLFUL. SHE CAN'T ANSWER YOU.

(Arioso)

CAROLINE

WHY NOT?
SHE HAS LOVED ME,
SERVED ME,
TAUGHT ME.
PUT ME TO BED,
WATCHED OVER MY SLEEP.
WHO KNOWS BETTER THAN SHE
HOW TO SAY WHAT LOVE IS?
CAN WORDS DO IT JUSTICE, MARGARET?
ENCOURAGE ITS SUCCESS?
OR, AS MY FATHER SAYS,
IS THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
AN IMPOSTER?
A THIEF IN THE NIGHT?

MARGARET

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MISS CAROLINE.
MR. GAINES IS THE EXPERT HERE.

EDWARD

YOU SEE?
SHE HAS NOTHING TO SAY ON THE MATTER.
LOVE IS NOT IN HER VOCABULARY.

CAROLINE (to MARGARET)

MY FATHER? THE EXPERT? HIS LOVE IS ROUGH. YOURS IS TENDER. MARGARET
ACT 1; SCENE 3

GUESTS

(enthusiastically joining in the discussion)

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS [VERY] OFTEN HARD TO EXPLAIN.
IT MAY BRING YOU TRUE JOY
BUT IT WILL CAUSE YOU GREAT PAIN!

offer much Canend IN such

GEORGE

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS A LIGHTHOUSE
TO GUIDE US OVER HEAVY WAVES...

EDWARD

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS A THIEF RESPECTING NO HOUSEHOLD,
STEALING THE LOVED ONES AWAY...

GUESTS

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS TOO COMPLEX TO BE KNOWN.
TIS BOUGHT WITHOUT PRICE,
AND IT CAN NEVER BE OWNED.

What

EDWARD

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IS AN IMPOSTER...

GEORGE

...IS A MAGICIAN...

EDWARD

...IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE! ...

GEORGE

...TURNING ROSES INTO DOVES ON THE WING!

MARGARET

WORDS OF LOVE ARE MOTHS --EASY FOOD FOR FLAME. ACTIONS ALONE SAY WHAT LOVE MAY BE.

EDWARD

ENOUGH! WE HAVE ALL HAD ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE.

GUESTS

YES, ENOUGH.
WHO IS INTERESTED
IN A SLAVE WOMAN'S VIEWS?

EDWARD

I REFUSE TO HEAR A SLAVE COMMENT ON THINGS OUTSIDE HER SCOPE. OF COURSE SHE IS TENDER TO A CHILD, BUT WHAT CAN A SLAVE KNOW OF ADULT LOVE, GIVEN FREELY? OUR GUESTS ARE RIGHT. HER VIEWS ARE WORTHLESS.

EDWARD (to MARGARET)

YOU ARE EXCUSED. LEAVE US.

(MARGARET exits)

CAROLINE

FATHER, YOU SHAME ME. SHE IS AS COMPLETE A HUMAN AS YOU ARE.

GEORGE

IF SHE IS A MOTHER, MAYBE MORE SO.

GUESTS

COMPLETE? IMPOSSIBLE! NOT AT ALL. OUTRAGEOUS!

EDWARD (to CAROLINE)

YOU DISAPPOINT ME.
HOW COULD LOVE EXIST IN A SLAVE?
PASSION, PERHAPS.
BUT WOULD SHE KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

CAROLINE

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF LOVE, FATHER.

CAROLINE and GEORGE

AND MANY KINDS OF LOVERS.

GUESTS

THIS IS TOO SUBTLE FOR ME.

AND ME...
...AND ME...
PERHAPS IT'S TIME TO SAY GOOD NIGHT.
ARGUMENT CHILLS A PARTY.
GOOD NIGHT...
...GOOD NIGHT...
...AND GOOD NIGHT!

(The GUESTS leave, bowing stiffly. They disapprove of GAINES's behavior and act coolly towards him.)

EDWARD

(chagrined by the GUESTS' early departure)

FOOLS, IDIOTS.
WHAT DO THEY KNOW ABOUT QUALITY FOLK?

(with regret)

THIS WAS TO BE A PROUD MOMENT. NOW YOU HAVE GIVEN MY NEIGHBORS MORE REASON TO GOSSIP AND DESPISE ME.

CAROLINE

I AM SORRY, FATHER, IF I UPSET YOU.

GEORGE

SO AM I.
DON'T THINK US UNGRATEFUL
FOR THIS CELEBRATION.

CAROLINE

FORGIVE US, FATHER.
WE DID NOT MEAN TO BE RUDE,
ONLY TO SAY WHAT WE BELIEVE.
HONESTY SHOULD NOT OFFEND YOU.

EDWARD

I AM NOT SO WEAK
AS TO BE OFFENDED BY INNOCENCE.
BUT I HAVE A REPUTATION TO MAINTAIN.

CAROLINE

FATHER, PLEASE TRY ...

EDWARD

...MY SWEET CAROLINE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
ALL IS WELL.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES.
GOODBYE.
TAKE CARE.

(CAROLINE and GEORGE leave)

EDWARD

IT DOESN'T MATTER AT ALL.
I HAVE SUCCEEDED
JUST AS I SAID I WOULD.
ENVY IS THE TRUE PRICE OF WEALTH
WHICH I EASILY, HAPPILY PAY.
A RICH MAN HAS MANY REMEDIES.

champagne

(EDWARD begins to leave, but when he notices MARGARET returning to clear the glasses, he lingers in a hiding place. She picks up a glass and holds it up to the light, peering into it as if it were a crystal ball.)

MARGARET (to the glass)

IS IT TRUE?
ARE THERE MANY KINDS OF LOVE?
SHOW ME EACH AND EVERY ONE.
YOU CAN'T, CAN YOU?
FOR THERE IS JUST ONE KIND.

ARIA

MARGARET

ONLY UNHARNESSED HEARTS
CAN SURVIVE A LOCKED-DOWN LIFE

LIKE A RIVER RUSHING FROM THE GRIP OF ITS BANKS AS LIGHT ESCAPES THE COLD STAR

QUALITY LOVE WILL BREAK AWAY

WHEN SORROW CLOUDS THE MIND THE SPINE GROWS STRONG

NO PRETTY WORDS CAN SOOTHE OR CURE WHAT HEAVY HANDS CAN BREAK

WHEN SORROW IS DEEP THE SECRET SOUL KEEPS

ITS QUALITY LOVE.

the love of all love

Euse

NO PRETTY WORDS CAN SOOTHE OR CURE WHAT HEAVY HANDS CAN BREAK

WHEN SORROW IS DEEP THE SECRET SOUL KEEPS

ITS QUALITY LOVE.

+ +

(EDWARD emerges from his hiding place, and walks toward MARGARET. He takes the glass from her hand, deliberately smashes it on the floor, and then pulls MARGARET's red scarf from his pocket. He dangles it before her menacingly.)

EDWARD (to MARGARET)

SUCH FINE SENTIMENTS.
TOO FINE, I THINK
FOR A SLAVE.
BUT I HAVE REMEDIES.

MARGARET

THEY CAN NOT TOUCH THE SECRET SOUL

EDWARD

YOUR SOUL IS NOT REALLY ON MY MIND.

(He slowly wraps the scarf around her neck. In total command, EDWARD drags her to his quarters.)

(exit)

End of Act One

No Break between Acts I and II

[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE III]

the longest of the interludes

Ren

MARGARET GARNER

Act II: Scene I - Winter, four years later (Jan. 1861) or Nov. 1869?)

In the shadows beyond CILLA's cabin, CASEY can be seen assaulting a black man. Later, MARGARET goes to CILLA's cabin, anticipating a visit from ROBERT, who has been secretly visiting her there on Sunday nights. When she arrives, MARGARET finds CILLA packing a carpetbag.

MARGARET

(agitated)

HAS HE COME?

CILLA

NOT YET.

MARGARET

IS HE HERE? HAS HE COME?

CILLA

NOT YET. BUT SOON.

MARGARET

(noticing CILLA's carpetbag)

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

CILLA

ROBERT IS MY SON
AND HIS WORD IS GOLD.
CALM YOURSELF.
YOUR DAUGHTER IS WITH KATE.
SO IS THE LITTLE ONE.

MARGARET

WHY ARE YOU FOLDING THEIR CLOTHES?
YOU ARE PACKING THEM AWAY!
WHAT AREN'T YOU TELLING ME?
HAS CASEY BEEN HERE?
IS HE TAKING THEM AWAY?

CILLA

YOU HAVE CHANGED SO, MARGARET.

EACH TIME YOU VISIT

I SEE LESS OF YOU

AND MORE OF A WET HEN.

DON'T CUT UP SO.

THE NEWS IS GOOD.

MARGARET

BUT I SAW CASEY LURKING NEARBY.
IS HE TAKING THEM AWAY?
HAVE THEY BEEN SOLD?
HAVE THEY? HAVE THEY?

MARGARET

WHAT NEWS? PLEASE, CILLA. WHAT IS HAPPENING?

(Arioso)

CILLA

(pulling MARGARET into a dark corner of the room)

IT'S TIME, DARLING GIRL.
AT LAST,
THE TIME HAS COME.
THE PLAN IS SET.
THAT'S WHY YOUR HUSBAND IS LATE.
HE IS MAKING SURE
ALL IS IN PLACE.
BLANKETS, FOOD, WATER.
YOU'RE LEAVING TONIGHT!

MARGARET SWEET JESUS!

CILLA

SWEETER THAN SYRUP AND RIGHT ON TIME.

(MARGARET picks up some articles of her children's clothing and pretends to "dance" with them, as if they were a wealthy couple at a fancy ball. She reprises a verse of her "LULLABY.")

MARGARET

SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE MEADOW SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE HAY MY BABIES GOT SOME DREAMING TO DO CAUSE FREEDOM'S ON THE WAY.

MARGARET and CILLA (together)

SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE MEADOW SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE HAY MY BABIES GOT SOME DREAMING TO DO CAUSE FREEDOM'S ON THE WAY.

(ROBERT arrives; he and MARGARET embrace)

MARGARET

(feigning anger at ROBERT)

YOU DIDN'T SAY A WORD LAST SUNDAY.

ROBERT

(taking her seriously)

I COULDN'T.
I HAD TO BE SURE.

MARGARET

(teasing)

YOU OUGHT TO TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING ... SOMETIME!

ROBERT

YOU NEED TO KEEP IT QUIET IN HERE.

MARGARET

ALRIGHT.
WHEN DO WE LEAVE?

ROBERT

THREE HOURS FROM NOW.

MARGARET

OH LORD.
I AM GONNA CRY.

ROBERT

YOU? NOT YOU!
MY SOLDIER GIRL'S GOING TO CRY?

(ROBERT tries to embrace MARGARET, but she pulls away, embarrassed to show her tears.)

IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT.

ARIA

ROBERT

GO CRY, GIRL YOU HAVE WON YOUR TEARS GO CRY, GIRL THROUGH YOUR TENDER YEARS
THE STRING IS CUT
THE TALE IS TOLD
I KNOW. I KNOW.
DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW.

THE GATE IS OPEN
THE WAY IS CLEAR
THE WORK IS DONE
AND THE TIME HAS COME, I KNOW.
DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW.
GO CRY, GIRL
GIRL, GO CRY.

MARGARET

(recovering her composure, but still anxious)

WHERE WILL WE GO?

ROBERT

(reassuringly) IT'S ALRIGHT.

MARGARET

ARE THERE OTHERS? WHO WILL LEAD US?

ROBERT IT'S ALRIGHT.

MARGARET

DO WE HAVE MONEY? WHERE WILL WE HIDE? IS THERE ENOUGH FOOD?

> ROBERT IT'S ALRIGHT.

ROBERT

SSHH. SSHH. I AM IN CHARGE.

NOW.

EVERYTHING IS READY EXCEPT YOU.

NOW YOU HELP MAMA FINISH PACKING.
I AM GOING FOR THE CHILDREN.

(ROBERT leaves)

CILLA

(locking the bag)

ALL DONE. I'M THROUGH.

MARGARET

WHERE ARE YOUR THINGS?
I DON'T SEE YOUR THINGS, MAMA.

CILLA

DARLING GIRL,
I AM TOO OLD TO TREAD NEW WATER.
I AM BOUND TO STAY HERE.

MARGARET

MAMA!
YOU HAVE TO COME WITH US.

CILLA

NO, I DON'T.
[YOU KNOW I WON'T.]

SEEING YOU, MY SON AND MY GRANDCHILDREN GONE FROM THIS PLACE, AWAY FROM SATAN'S BREATH IS MY BLESSING.

DON'T MOURN ME.
WHEN MY FAMILY IS SAFE,
I WILL BE ONLY *NEAR* THE CROSS -NOT ON IT.

ARIA

CILLA

HE IS BY, FOREVER BY ME. IN HIS SHADOW
I WILL LINGER ON A WHILE
TIL HE CALLS ME.

HE IS BY, FOREVER BY ME.

NO TRUMPETS OR STREETS OF GOLD
HE WILL COME IN SILENCE
BAREFOOT IN THE GRASS
AND GATHER ME IN HIS ARMS.

MARGARET

(sung in counterpoint with CILLA)

PLEASE DON'T CONFINE US
TO THE EDGE OF YOUR MIND IN SHADOW.
WE DON'T WANT TRUMPETS
OR STREETS OF GOLD
AS WE LEAVE IN SILENCE,
BAREFOOT IN THE GRASS
GIVE US YOUR ARMS.

CILLA and MARGARET (together)

AMEN.

MARGARET

IT WILL BREAK MY HEART KNOWING YOU ARE STILL HERE. WE CAN'T BE FREE WITHOUT YOU. ROBERT WILL INSIST.

CILLA

I WILL RESIST.
I AM HIS PARENT.
HE IS NOT MINE.
HUSH, CHILD.
HEAR ME NOW:

DON'T WASTE MUSCLE WHERE NONE IS WANTED.
YOU WILL NEED EVERY BONE AND SINEW
PLUS YOUR MIND
TO GET AWAY FROM HERE.
FOLLOW YOUR HUSBAND.
SAVE YOUR CHILDREN, MOTHER!

CILLA

REAR UP, NOW. HELP ROBERT WITH THE CHILDREN.

(they hear footsteps approaching the cabin)

HERE HE COMES.

(MARGARET and CILLA recoil in fear, as it is not ROBERT, but CASEY, who storms into the cabin.)

(After glancing around, CASEY picks up one of the carpetbags and throws it across the room. He then grabs MARGARET by the throat.)

CASEY

PLANNING A LITTLE TRIP?
OR JUST CLEANIN' OUT THE STY?

ROBERT

(calling from outside)

THE CHILDREN ARE COMING!
THE CHILDREN ARE ...

(Upon entering the cabin, ROBERT quickly halts when he sees CASEY.)

CASEY

WELL, I'LL BE. [WELL, I'LL BE.]
LOOK WHAT CRAWLED OUT OF THE WOODS.
PAPPY BEAR.
COMIN' TO GET MAMMY BEAR
AND ALL THE LITTLE CUBS?

(ROBERT, MARGARET and CILLA are terrorstricken.)

CASEY (to CILLA)

I GUESS YOU MUST BE GOLDILOCKS. SEEMS THE PORRIDGE IS ALL ET UP. LET ME SEE WHAT I CAN OFFER YOU.

(pulling a pistol out of his coat)

GUN POWDER MIGHT BE A LITTLE DRY, BUT GOLDILOCKS GOT TO EAT, DON'T SHE?

(Pointing the pistol at CILLA's mouth, CASEY motions to ROBERT and MARGARET with his free hand.)

LET'S JUST LINE UP OVER THERE.

(Impulsively, ROBERT attacks CASEY. A violent struggle ensues, during which ROBERT manages to wrest away CASEY'S pistol. He points the pistol at CASEY, yet hesitates to shoot him.)

CASEY

YOU KILL ME, BOTH OF US IS DEAD. YOUR FAMILY TOO.

ROBERT

AND IF YOU LIVE, WILL THEY?

MARGARET

DON'T KILL HIM. HE'S ALREADY DEAD.

CASEY (to MARGARET)

BLACK SLUT! DON'T YOU BEG FOR ME!

ROBERT

DOG WITHOUT TEETH!!
REMEMBER HELL?
GO HOME TO IT NOW!

(He shoots CASEY in the back of the head, killing him.)

CILLA

LAP OF GOD, ROBERT. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

ROBERT

PROVED MY WORTH AS A MAN AND YOUR SON.

CILLA

(clasping her hands)

FORGIVE HIM, FATHER. THIS MAY BE THE END.

MARGARET

NO! WE CAN'T CHANGE WHAT IS DONE.
QUICK! ROBERT,
YOU HAVE TO RUN!

ROBERT

I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALL HERE!

MARGARET

TELL ME WHERE TO MEET YOU.
THEN GO!

ROBERT (agitated)

IN THE BOTTOM...
BY THE MIMOSA.
THE GRASS IS TALL THERE.
WHEN THE MOON HITS
THE TOP OF THE PINES,
THE WAGON WILL BE THERE.

CILLA

HURRY, SON!
MAKE TRACKS. NOW!
WE'LL HANDLE GOD'S OUTCAST.

(she drags CASEY's body away)

ROBERT

MARGARET.
OH, MY SWEET WOMAN!

MARGARET

THE BOTTOM...
TALL GRASS...
MIMOSA...

ROBERT

BE THERE.
WHEN THE MOONLIGHT...

MARGARET

... TOUCHES PINE

ROBERT

LISTEN FOR THE WAGON WHEELS. WATCH FOR...

MARGARET

MOONLIGHT. THE MOONLIGHT. WE'LL MEET YOU IN THE MOONLIGHT. GO!

(ROBERT exits)

End of Act Two, Scene One

[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE IV]

MARGARET GARNER

Act II

Scene I: Winter, four years later (January 1861).

November 1860

In the shadows beyond CILLA's cabin, CASEY can be seen assaulting a black man. Later, MARGARET goes to CILLA's cabin, anticipating a visit from ROBERT, who has been secretly visiting her there on Sunday nights. When she arrives, MARGARET finds CILLA packing a carpetbag.

MARGARET

HAS HE COME?

CILLA

NOT YET, BUT SOON.
ROBERT IS MY SON
AND HIS WORD IS GOLD.

MARGARET

(noticing CILLA's carpetbag)

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

CILLA

CALM YOURSELF.
YOUR DAUGHTER IS WITH KATE.
SO ARE THE TWINS.

MARGARET

WHY ARE YOU FOLDING THEIR CLOTHES?
YOU ARE PACKING THEM AWAY!
WHAT AREN'T YOU TELLING ME?
HAS CASEY BEEN HERE?

CILLA

YOU HAVE CHANGED SO, MARGARET.

EACH TIME YOU VISIT

I SEE LESS OF YOU

AND MORE OF A WET HEN.

MARGARET

BUT I SAW CASEY LURKING NEARBY. IS HE TAKING THEM AWAY? HAVE THEY BEEN SOLD? HAVE THEY? HAVE THEY?

CILLA

DON'T CUT UP SO. THE NEWS IS GOOD.

MARGARET

WHAT NEWS? PLEASE, CILLA. WHAT IS HAPPENING?

(Arioso)

CILLA

(pulling MARGARET into a dark corner of the room)

IT'S TIME, DARLING GIRL.
AT LAST,
THE TIME HAS COME.
THE PLAN IS SET.
THAT'S WHY YOUR HUSBAND IS LATE.
HE IS MAKING SURE
ALL IS IN PLACE.
BLANKETS, FOOD, WATER.
YOU'RE LEAVING TONIGHT.

MARGARET SWEET JESUS!

CILLA

SWEETER THAN SYRUP AND RIGHT ON TIME.

(MARGARET picks up some articles of her children's clothing and pretends to "dance" with them, as if they were a wealthy couple at a fancy ball. She reprises a verse of her "LULLABY.")

MARGARET

SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE MEADOW SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE HAY MY BABIES GOT SOME DREAMING TO DO CAUSE FREEDOM'S ON THE WAY

(ROBERT arrives; he and MARGARET embrace)

MARGARET

YOU DIDN'T SAY A WORD LAST SUNDAY.

ROBERT

I COULDN'T. I HAD TO BE SURE.

MARGARET

WHEN DO WE LEAVE?

ROBERT

THREE HOURS.

MARGARET

OH LORD.
I'M GOING TO CRY.

ROBERT

YOU? NOT YOU!
MY SOLDIER GIRL'S GOING TO CRY?

(Several times, ROBERT tries to embrace MARGARET, but she pulls away, embarrassed to show her tears.)

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

ARIA

ROBERT

GO CRY, GIRL
YOU HAVE WON YOUR TEARS
GO CRY, GIRL
THE STRING IS CUT
THE TALE IS TOLD
I KNOW. I KNOW.
DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW.

GO CRY, GIRL
GIRL, GO CRY
THE GATE IS OPEN
THE WAY IS CLEAR
DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW.
GO CRY, GIRL
GIRL, GO CRY.

MARGARET

(recovering her composure, but still anxious)

WHERE WILL WE GO?
ARE THERE OTHERS?
WHO WILL LEAD US?
DO WE HAVE MONEY?
WHERE WILL WE HIDE?
IS THERE ENOUGH FOOD?

ROBERT

SSHH. SSHH.
I AM IN CHARGE.
EVERYTHING IS READY
EXCEPT YOU.
NOW HELP MAMA FINISH PACKING.
I AM GOING FOR THE CHILDREN.

(ROBERT leaves)

CILLA

(locking the bag)

ALL DONE. I'M THROUGH.

MARGARET

WHERE ARE YOUR THINGS?
I DON'T SEE YOUR THINGS, MAMA.

CILLA

DARLING GIRL,
I AM TOO OLD
TO TREAD NEW WATER.
I AM BOUND TO STAY HERE.

MARGARET

MAMA! YOU HAVE TO COME WITH US.

CILLA

NO, I DON'T.
SEEING YOU,
MY SON AND MY GRANDCHILDREN
GONE FROM THIS PLACE,
AWAY FROM SATAN'S BREATH
IS MY BLESSING.

DON'T MOURN ME.
WHEN MY FAMILY IS SAFE,
I WILL BE ONLY *NEAR* THE CROSS -NOT ON IT.

ARIA

CILLA

HE IS BY,
FOREVER BY ME.
IN HIS SHADOW
I WILL LINGER ON A WHILE
TIL HE CALLS ME.

NO TRUMPETS OR STREETS OF GOLD HE WILL COME IN SILENCE BAREFOOT IN THE GRASS AND GATHER ME IN HIS ARMS

MARGARET

(sung in counterpoint with CILLA)

PLEASE DON'T CONFINE US
TO THE EDGE OF YOUR MIND
IN SHADOW.
WE DON'T WANT
TRUMPETS OR STREETS OF GOLD
AS WE LEAVE IN SILENCE
BAREFOOT IN THE GRASS
GIVE US YOUR ARMS

CILLA (alone)

AMEN.

MARGARET

IT WILL BREAK MY HEART
KNOWING YOU ARE STILL HERE.
WE CAN'T BE FREE
WITHOUT YOU.
ROBERT WILL INSIST.

CILLA

I WILL RESIST.
I AM HIS PARENT.
HE IS NOT MINE.
HUSH. HEAR ME NOW:
DON'T WASTE MUSCLE WHERE NONE IS WANTED.
YOU WILL NEED EVERY BONE AND SINEW
PLUS YOUR MIND
TO GET AWAY FROM HERE.
FOLLOW YOUR HUSBAND.
SAVE YOUR CHILDREN, MOTHER!

(they hear footsteps approaching the cabin)

CILLA

(smiling nervously)

REAR UP, NOW. HELP ROBERT WITH THE CHILDREN.

(CASEY storms into the cabin. Shocked, MARGARET and CILLA recoil in fear.)

CASEY

(looking around)

PLANNING A LITTLE TRIP? OR JUST CLEANING OUT THE STY?

ROBERT

(calling from outside)

THE CHILDREN ARE COMING!

(Upon entering the cabin, ROBERT quickly halts when he sees CASEY.)

THEY...

CASEY

WELL, I'LL BE. LOOK WHAT CRAWLED OUT OF THE WOODS.

PAPPY BEAR. COME TO GET MAMMY BEAR AND ALL THE LITTLE CUBS?

(ROBERT, MARGARET and CILLA freeze in terror.)

CASEY (to CILLA)

I GUESS YOU
MUST BE GOLDILOCKS.
SEEMS THE PORRIDGE IS ALL ET UP.
LET ME SEE
WHAT I CAN OFFER YOU.

(pulling a pistol out of his coat)

GUN POWDER MIGHT BE A LITTLE DRY, BUT GOLDILOCKS GOT TO EAT, DON'T SHE?

(Pointing the pistol at CILLA's mouth, CASEY motions to ROBERT and MARGARET with his free hand.)

LET'S JUST LINE UP OVER THERE.

(Impulsively, ROBERT attacks CASEY. A violent struggle ensues, during which ROBERT manages to wrest away CASEY'S pistol. He points the pistol at CASEY, yet hesitates to shoot him.)

CASEY

YOU KILL ME, BOTH OF US IS DEAD. YOUR FAMILY TOO.

ROBERT

AND IF YOU LIVE, WILL THEY?

MARGARET

DON'T KILL HIM. HE IS ALREADY DEAD. **CASEY** (to MARGARET)

BLACK SLUT! DON'T YOU BEG FOR ME!

ROBERT

DOG WITHOUT TEETH!! REMEMBER HELL? GO HOME TO IT NOW!

(he shoots CASEY dead)

CILLA

LAP OF GOD, ROBERT. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

ROBERT

PROVED MY WORTH AS A MAN AND YOUR SON.

CILLA

(clasping her hands)

FORGIVE HIM, FATHER. THIS MAY BE THE END.

MARGARET

NO! WE CAN'T CHANGE WHAT IS DONE.

QUICK! ROBERT,

YOU HAVE TO RUN!

ROBERT

I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALL HERE!

MARGARET

TELL ME WHERE TO MEET YOU.
THEN GO!

ROBERT (agitated)

IN THE BOTTOM...
BY THE MIMOSA.
THE GRASS IS TALL THERE.
WHEN THE MOON HITS
THE TOP OF THE PINES,
THE WAGON WILL BE THERE.

CILLA

HURRY, SON!
MAKE TRACKS. NOW!
WE'LL HANDLE GOD'S OUTCAST.

(she drags CASEY's body away)

ROBERT

MARGARET.
OH, MY SWEET WOMAN!

MARGARET

THE BOTTOM...
TALL GRASS...
MIMOSA...

ROBERT

BE THERE.
WHEN THE MOONLIGHT...

MARGARET

... TOUCHES PINE

ROBERT

LISTEN FOR THE WAGON WHEELS. WATCH FOR...

MARGARET

MOONLIGHT.
THE MOONLIGHT.
WE'LL MEET YOU
IN THE MOONLIGHT. GO!

(ROBERT exits)

End of Act Two, Scene One

[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE IV]

Scene ii: One week later, at twilight.

ROBERT and MARGARET have escaped from their masters; they have successfully crossed the Ohio River and reached Cincinnati, a city in the Free State of Ohio. A winter storm threatens. ROBERT is standing underneath a huge elm tree, near the entrance to an underground shed where he and MARGARET, now both outlaws, are hiding with their children in an attempt to avoid being recaptured and returned to their masters. Glimmering hot coals can be seen in a hole in the shed's earthen floor.

MARGARET

(emerging from the shed)

WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU HEARD?

ROBERT

THEY SAY THIS NEW PRESIDENT DOESN'T HISS LIKE A SNAKE; THAT HE TALKS LIKE A MAN.

MARGARET

WHAT HAS HE SAID?

ROBERT

THAT A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT STAND.
AND THAT THE UNION IS SACRED.

MARGARET

THAT MEANS WAR ...

(music to provide a shift in mood/drama)

MARGARET

OH ROBERT,
THE CHILDREN ARE TROUBLED.
THEY CRY IN THEIR SLEEP.

ROBERT

I KNOW. BUT FREEDOM IS IN OUR TEETH.

MARGARET

TELL ME AGAIN.
WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS PLACE?

ROBERT

OHIO. IT MEANS 'BEAUTIFUL.'

MARGARET

IS IT?

ROBERT

SO I HEAR. A BEAUTIFUL PLACE FOR A FUTURE.

MARGARET

TELL ME.
TELL ME WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BE LIKE.

ROBERT

IT WILL BE YOU AS MY WIFE
NO OTHER MAN CAN TOUCH OR CLAIM.
IT WILL BE
THE CHILDREN SEATED NOT BENT.

SEATED IN SCHOOL ROOMS

NOT BENDING THROUGH ROWS OF CORN.

IT WILL BE ME PAID FOR MY LABOR

WITH COIN OF THE REALM.

MARGARET

WILL I PLANT A GARDEN?

MEND YOUR SHIRTS BY LAMPLIGHT?

WILL I WATCH FROM A WINDOW

OUR CHILDREN TUMBLING IN CLOVER AND ROSEMARY?

ROBERT

TRUST ME, MARGARET. IT WILL BE JUST SO.

MARGARET

WILL THEY SWIM IN CLEAR WATER UNTIL THEIR SKIN GLITTERS LIKE BRASS? TELL ME.

ROBERT

THEY WILL.

LOOK. SEE THIS TREE?

HOW ITS LOWERING BRANCHES PROTECT YOU

NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER BRINGS.

IMAGINE.

THAT IS HOW I WILL ALWAYS BE.

(MARGARET picks a leaf from the tree and caresses ROBERT'S face with it. They dance a teasing, catch-me dance around the tree.)

MARGARET

THAT IS HOW IT WILL ALWAYS BE.

ROBERT

THAT IS HOW I WILL ALWAYS BE.

(places the leaf in her hair)

COME INSIDE.
IT'S DANGEROUS OUT HERE.
SOMEONE MAY SEE US.

(They return to the shed.)

(Soon, loud hoof beats are heard approaching. ROBERT grabs his pistol, and MARGARET runs to protect her children, sleeping in the corner behind a blanket. Accompanied by four SLAVE CATCHERS, EDWARD GAINES pounds on the shed door.)

EDWARD

OPEN! OPEN UP!

(no sound is heard from inside the shed)

IF BLOODSHED IS ON YOUR MIND, DON'T WORRY. I JUST WANT WHAT IS MINE.

EDWARD and SLAVE CATCHERS

NO HARM. COME SOFTLY.
NO HARM. OPEN UP.
THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO.
WE CAN WAIT. WE WILL WAIT.
AS LONG AS WE HAVE TO.
THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

(Intoxicated, GAINES breaks down the shed door and fires his pistol in the air. ROBERT shoots at GAINES, but misses his target. The SLAVE CATCHERS knock ROBERT to the ground and tie him up. Screaming, MARGARET emerges from behind the childrens' blanket.)

MARGARET

NO! NO MORE! WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE US BE?

EDWARD

LEAVE MURDERERS BE?
I OWN HIM!
I OWN YOUR CHILDREN!

(in an angry tone, although in his drunken state he thinks he is being tender)

I OWN YOU.

(EDWARD roughly grabs MARGARET from behind, twirling her around)

MARGARET

(moaning as she sees ROBERT being dragged out)

SOMEBODY HELP US! SOMEBODY!

EDWARD

MY BED IS COLD, GIRL.
IT WANTS HEATING.
REMEMBER THE BEDWARMER YOU RAN OVER MY SHEETS?
FIRST YOU FILLED IT WITH HOT COALS AS I RECALL...

MARGARET

(breaking loose)

HERE THEY ARE! TAKE THEM! TAKE THEM!

(MARGARET plunges her hand into the smoldering fire, and grabs a piece of coal to throw at GAINES. She continues to throw bits of coal at him, but he successfully dodges them. Grabbing MARGARET'S wrists, GAINES looks at her scorched hands, then forces her to her knees.)

EDWARD

PRETEND TO BE CRAZY AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE.

MANGLE YOURSELF, I DON'T CARE.

(He throws her flat on the ground. The children cry loudly.)

EDWARD

CASEY WAS NOT ENOUGH? YOU WILL KILL ME TOO? OH NO, MY LITTLE CROW.

(A SLAVE CATCHER returns to the shed.)

SLAVE CATCHER

HE'S BOUND AND READY, SIR.

MARGARET

DAMN YOUR MARBLE EYES, YOUR PUTRID, PUTRID HEART. DAMN YOUR SLITHERING SOUL!

EDWARD

(to SLAVE CATCHER)

TAKE THE YOUNG ONES TO THE WAGON.
THEN LIGHT THE FIRE.
THE NIGHT IS COLD
AND PROMISES TO BE LONG.

(In silhouette, ROBERT is seen standing outside on a tall box underneath the elm tree. A noose is hanging around his neck.)

ROBERT

MARGARET! MARGARET! I LOVE YOU! I LOVE ...

(As the box is kicked away, ROBERT's voice is cut off abruptly. In the sudden stillness, MARGARET pulls the leaf from her hair, and holds it in her scorched hands, weeping.)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT TWO

INTERMISSION

Scene iii: EDWARD GAINES's parlor, in early summer 1857.

An engagement party is taking place to celebrate the betrothal of CAROLINE GAINES, Edward's daughter, to GEORGE HANCOCK, a Captain in the United States Army. The guests – the local townspeople whom Edward is very eager to impress -- waltz to the gentle accompaniment of a piano and violin. Although MARGARET is dressed more nicely now, in the uniform befitting a house servant, she acts in a more subjugated manner.

EDWARD

(to the GUESTS)

PLEASE. MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION?

(the GUESTS gather around)

THE GUESTS (the White Chorus)

MR. GAINES WANTS TO SPEAK. MR. GAINES WANTS TO SPEAK.

RAISE YOUR GLASS FOR A TOAST!

THERE IS NOTHING SO FINE AS SEEING A COUPLE IN LOVE.

(GAINES and MARGARET glance at each other.)

(Arioso)

EDWARD

I PROMISED CAROLINE'S MOTHER
TWO THINGS.
ONE, THAT I WOULD STAY
A WIDOWER.
TWO, THAT I WOULD SEE
TO OUR DAUGHTER'S FUTURE CARE.
CAROLINE HAS PROVEN
THE RIGHTNESS OF THOSE PROMISES.
SHE WILL INHERIT A SOUND ESTATE—WHICH, I MIGHT ADD,
HAS GROWN FROM MODEST TO GRAND.
THANKS TO ME.

AND HER CHOICE OF HUSBAND
IS EVERYTHING
HER MOTHER GOULD HAVE WISHED FOR.

would OK

gather round our gracious host.

THE GUESTS

BEAUTIFUL WORDS.
RAISE YOUR GLASS IN A TOAST!

from our the host OK

(They acknowledge each other as they clink their glasses.)

EDWARD

A MAN OF STATURE AND LEARNING.

(GAINES nods his head in respect to GEORGE, a Captain in the United States Army.)

THE GUESTS

AND HER CHOICE OF HUSBAND IS EVERYTHING HER MOTHER WISHED FOR.

CAROLINE

AND YOU, FATHER?
IS HE WHAT YOU HAVE WISHED FOR ME?

EDWARD

EXACTLY SO. PRECISELY SO. AM I RIGHT, CAPTAIN?

George? Oll

GEORGE

I'M NOT SURE
THAT I DESERVE HER,
BUT I WILL SPEND MY LIFE
TRYING TO SERVE HER
AND EARN THE DEVOTION
SHE SQUANDERS ON ME.

THE GUESTS

THERE IS NOTHING SO WONDEROUS AS BEING IN LOVE.

MARGARET ACT 1; SCENE 3

THE GUESTS, EDWARD, CAROLINE and GEORGE

AS BEING A COUPLE IN LOVE. Seeing & Marriage THERE IS NOTHING SO WONDEROUS

FEMALE GUESTS

A COUPLE IN LOVE. 7 A marriage for love MC

MALE GUESTS

A COUPLE IN LOVE.

EDWARD

WELL PUT, SON.

CAROLINE, MY ADORABLE CAROLINE. GIVE YOUR FATHER A DAUGHTER'S EMBRACE.

(EDWARD clutches CAROLINE too tightly while embracing her.)

CAROLINE (amused)

OH, FATHER. I CANNOT BREATHE.

FORGIVE ME.

(Sarcastre? Jealous)

MY ARMS ARE LIKE MY LOVE. STRONG AND ALL EMBRACING.

CAROLINE

NEVER MIND, FATHER. I HAVE PROSPERED SO MUCH IN YOUR ARMS I CAN NOW EMBRACE ANOTHER.

(turns to GEORGE)

GEORGE

THERE IS NO RIVAL HERE.
LOVE DOES NOT CONQUER OR DISPOSE.
IT DOUBLES AND TRIPLES WITH USE.

EDWARD

I AGREE. LIKE MONEY IN THE BANK.

GEORGE

OH, NO, SIR.
LOVE IS AN OCEAN
BREAKING INTO RIVERS;
THOSE RIVERS
BREAKING INTO STREAMS.

EDWARD

WATCH OUT, DAUGHTER! HE WILL DROWN YOU.

CAROLINE

ALL WILLINGLY ...

WILLINGLY, WILL I SWIM
IN HIS SEA OF LOVE.
AIR MEANS NOTHING TO ME
WITHOUT HIM.

EDWARD

A MINUTE AGO YOU WERE GASPING FOR AIR.

-(mimicking CAROLINE)

'I CAN'T BREATHE!'

NOW YOU TRADE IT FOR WATER.
YOUR CONFUSION DISTURBS ME, DAUGHTER.

stage directions?
(graciously)

(starting to bristle)

Cunwi Hurty marensur, her father's insecurit,

(agifated, almost (agifated, almost (agifated, almost)

GEORGE

SHE NEEDS BOTH, SIR.

AS ALL LIFE DOES:

AIR AND WATER.

NO RIVALRY THERE.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IS ALWAYS CONFUSING.

IT CAN NEVER BE AS CLEAR

AS THE EMOTION IT TRIES TO CONVEY.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE ...

EDWARD

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS AN IMPOSTER!
HIDING IN DRESSES OF VERSE...

GEORGE

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS A MAGICIAN!
TURNING ROSES INTO DOVES ON THE WING...

EDWARD

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE...

CAROLINE

...A RAFT IN A STORMY SEA, OFFERING RESCUE...

THE GUESTS

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS [VERY] OFTEN HARD TO EXPLAIN.
IT MAY BRING YOU TRUE JOY
BUT IT WILL CAUSE YOU GREAT PAIN!

Hrimpossible

that can end in par

GEORGE

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS A LIGHT HOUSE
TO GUIDE US OVER HEAVY WAVES...

EDWARD

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS A THIEF RESPECTING NO HOUSEHOLD,
STEALING THE LOVED ONES AWAY...

THE GUESTS

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS TOO GONCISE [COMPLEX] TO BE KNOWN.

WHAT IT IS BOUGHT WITHOUT PRICE,
AND IT CAN NEVER BE OWNED.

EDWARD

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IS AN IMPOSTER...

GEORGE

IS A MAGICIAN...

EDWARD

IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE!

GEORGE

TURNING ROSES INTO DOVES ON THE WING!

THE GUESTS

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE
IS A DANGEROUS ART.
IT CAN OPEN YOUR EYES
BUT IT WILL TEAR OUT YOUR HEART!

or easily (1 less syMable?)

EDWARD

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IS AN IMPOSTER...

GEORGE

IS A MAGICIAN...

EDWARD

IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE ...

GEORGE

IT'S A LIGHTHOUSE TO GUIDE US ...

EDWARD

IT'S A THIEF RESPECTING NO HOUSEHOLD, STEALING THE LOVED ONES AWAY...

CAROLINE

IT'S A CLIPPER SHIP
WITH ROOM AFTER ROOM [AFTER ROOM]
FOR DANCING ...
AND CAKES AND TEA AND CHAMPAGNE!

(MARGARET enters with a tray of glasses.)

(With a nod of approval from her father, CAROLINE encourages the musicians to play a spirited waltz. THE GUESTS quickly return to the dance floor, reveling in the joyous music. Although GAINES appears uncomfortable at first about the argument that just transpired, he eventually recollects himself and once again plays the gracious host.)

EDWARD

WELL THAT IS OUR ANSWER, THEN.
CHAMPAGNE HEALS ALL WOUNDS
AND PUTS ARGUMENT TO BED.
CONGRATULATIONS, SON.
BLESSINGS, DAUGHTER.

(He drinks a toast to the couple as MARGARET serves the GUESTS.)

CAROLINE

MARGARET. WAIT A MOMENT. COME TO ME. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

MARGARET

EXCUSE ME? MAM?

CAROLINE

WHAT DO YOU THINK
ABOUT LOVE?
WE WERE DISCUSSING
THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE IT.

DO THEY HELP US TO LOVE OR HURT US BEYOND REPAIR?

EDWARD (warning)

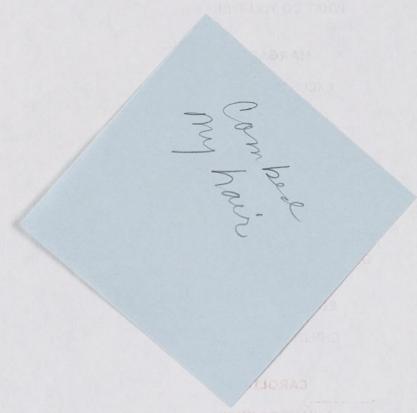
CHILD! DEAR CHILD!

CAROLINE

I WANT TO KNOW.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHE THINKS.

EDWARD

CHILD, PLEASE! CHILD, NO MORE!



GUESTS (alarmed)

OH DEAR. OH DEAR. WE THOUGHT HE WAS QUALITY.

[OH DEAR, OH DEAR]

THIS IS A MISTAKE QUALITY FOLK WOULD NEVER MAKE.

[OH DEAR, OH DEAR]

A PROFOUND INSULT. WHAT KIND OF HOUSE DOES HE RUN? WE DON'T BEHAVE THIS WAY!

CUT ????????

CAROLINE

I WANT TO KNOW. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHE THINKS.

EDWARD

CAROLINE, YOU ARE TOO WILLFUL. SHE CAN'T ANSWER YOU.

Sho won't answer

(Arioso)

CAROLINE

WHY NOT? SHE HAS LOVED ME, SERVED ME, TAUGHT ME. PUT ME TO BED,

pressed me WATCHED OVER MY SLEEP. WHO KNOWS BETTER THAN SHE HOW TO SAY WHAT LOVE IS? CAN WORDS DO IT JUSTICE, MARGARET? **ENCOURAGE ITS SUCCESS?** OR, AS MY FATHER SAYS, IS THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE AN IMPOSTER? A THIEF IN THE NIGHT?

IS THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE AN IMPOSTER? A THIEF IN THE NIGHT?

MARGARET

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MISS CAROLINE.
MR. GAINES IS THE EXPERT HERE.

EDWARD

YOU SEE?
SHE HAS NOTHING TO SAY ON THE MATTER.
LOVE IS NOT IN HER VOCABULARY.

CAROLINE (to MARGARET)

MY FATHER? THE EXPERT? HIS LOVE IS ROUGH. YOURS IS TENDER. of stet?

MARGARET

WORDS OF LOVE ARE MOTHS --EASY FOOD FOR FLAME. ACTIONS ALONE SAY WHAT LOVE MAY BE.

EDWARD

WE HAVE ALL HAD ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE.

GUESTS

YES, ENOUGH.
WHO IS INTERESTED
IN A SLAVE WOMAN'S VIEWS?

o dear (reprise)

EDWARD

I REFUSE TO HEAR A SLAVE COMMENT ON THINGS OUTSIDE HER SCOPE. OF COURSE SHE IS TENDER TO A CHILD, BUT WHAT CAN A SLAVE KNOW OF ADULT LOVE, GIVEN FREELY? OUR GUESTS ARE RIGHT. HER VIEWS ARE WORTHLESS.

EDWARD (to MARGARET)

YOU ARE EXCUSED. LEAVE US.

(MARGARET exits)

CAROLINE

FATHER, YOU SHAME ME. SHE IS AS COMPLETE A HUMAN AS YOU ARE.

GEORGE

IF SHE IS A MOTHER, MAYBE MORE SO.

GUESTS

COMPLETE? IMPOSSIBLE! NOT AT ALL. OUTRAGEOUS!

EDWARD (to CAROLINE)

YOU DISAPPOINT ME.
HOW COULD LOVE EXIST IN A SLAVE?
PASSION, PERHAPS.
BUT WOULD SHE KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

CAROLINE

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF LOVE, FATHER.

CAROLINE and GEORGE

AND MANY KINDS OF LOVERS.

GUESTS

THIS IS TOO SUBTLE FOR ME.

AND ME...
...AND ME...
PERHAPS IT'S TIME TO SAY GOOD NIGHT.

(GUESTS)

ARGUMENT CHILLS A PARTY.
GOOD NIGHT...
...GOOD NIGHT...
...AND GOOD NIGHT!

(The GUESTS leave, bowing stiffly. They disapprove of GAINES's behavior and act coolly towards him.)

EDWARD

(chagrined by the GUESTS' early departure)

FOOLS, IDIOTS.
WHAT DO THEY KNOW ABOUT QUALITY FOLK?

(with regret)

THIS WAS TO BE A PROUD MOMENT. NOW YOU HAVE GIVEN MY NEIGHBORS MORE REASON TO GOSSIP AND DESPISE ME.

CAROLINE

I AM SORRY, FATHER, IF I UPSET YOU.

GEORGE

SO AM I.
DON'T THINK US UNGRATEFUL
FOR THIS CELEBRATION.

CAROLINE

FORGIVE US, FATHER. WE DID NOT MEAN TO BE RUDE,

2 the

misical interlude

ONLY TO SAY WHAT WE BELIEVE. HONESTY SHOULD NOT OFFEND YOU.

EDWARD

I AM NOT SO WEAK
AS TO BE OFFENDED BY INNOCENCE.
BUT I HAVE A REPUTATION TO MAINTAIN.
CAROLINE

FATHER, PLEASE TRY ...

EDWARD

...MY SWEET CAROLINE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
ALL IS WELL.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES.
GOODBYE.
TAKE CARE.

(CAROLINE and GEORGE leave)

EDWARD

IT DOESN'T MATTER AT ALL.

I HAVE SUCCEEDED

JUST AS I SAID I WOULD.

ENVY IS THE TRUE PRICE OF WEALTH

WHICH I EASILY, HAPPILY PAY.

A RICH MAN HAS MANY REMEDIES.

(EDWARD begins to leave, but when he notices MARGARET returning to clear the glasses, he lingers in a hiding place. She picks up a glass and holds it up to the light, peering into it as if it were a crystal ball.)

MARGARET (to the glass)

IS IT TRUE?
ARE THERE MANY KINDS OF LOVE?
SHOW ME EACH AND EVERY ONE.
YOU CAN'T, CAN YOU?
FOR THERE IS JUST ONE KIND.

ARIA

MARGARET

ONLY UNHARNESSED HEARTS CAN SURVIVE A LOCKED-DOWN LIFE

LIKE A RIVER RUSHING FROM THE GRIP OF ITS BANKS AS LIGHT ESCAPES THE COLD STAR my weapon of choice

QUALITY LOVE WILL BREAK AWAY

WHEN SORROW CLOUDS THE MIND THE SPINE GROWS STRONG

NO PRETTY WORDS CAN SOOTHE OR CURE WHAT HEAVY HANDS CAN BREAK

WHEN SORROW IS DEEP THE SECRET SOUL KEEPS. meadow of who

ITS QUALITY LOVE

NO PRETTY WORDS CAN SOOTHE OR CURE WHAT HEAVY HANDS CAN BREAK

> WHEN SORROW IS DEEP THE SECRET SOUL KEEPS meapon of trechneits

ITS QUALITY LOVE.

(EDWARD emerges from his hiding place, and walks toward MARGARET. He takes the glass from her hand, deliberately smashes it on the floor, and then pulls MARGARET's red scarf from his pocket. He dangles it before her menacingly.)

EDWARD (to MARGARET)

SUCH FINE SENTIMENTS. TOO FINE, I THINK FOR A SLAVE. BUT I HAVE REMEDIES.

MARGARET

tA man has many

THEY CAN NOT TOUCH THE SECRET SOUL

EDWARD

YOUR SOUL IS NOT REALLY ON MY MIND.

(He slowly wraps the scarf around her neck. In total command, EDWARD drags her to his quarters.) (exit)

End of Act One

No Break between Acts I and II

[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE III] the longest of the interludes

Scene ii: Harvest time, about six months later.

The slaves -- some of whom are children, barely 10 or 12 years old - head back to their quarters after a day working in the fields.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHORUS

ROBERT

TURN MY FACE TO THE DYING SUN

CHORUS

TURN MY FACE TO THE DYING SUN

ROBERT

CAN'T STRAIGHTEN MY BACK TIL THE WORK IS DONE

CHORUS

CAN'T STRAIGHTEN MY BACK TIL THE WORK IS DONE

ROBERT

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

CHORUS

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

ROBERT

GOING TO DANCE ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK SOMEDAY

CHORUS

GOING TO DANCE ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK SOMEDAY

ALL (ROBERT and CHORUS)

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER

DON'T ABANDON ME

WHILE MY SWEAT STILL SWEETS THE VELVET DIRT

OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.



CHORUS

(soprano soloist) BOSS IS HAPPY AT HIS PLATE (chorus) LONG AS HE GETS HIS FOWL (soprano soloist) IF I STAND AT HIS COOKING STOVE (chorus) HIS SUPPER WILL BE FOUL.

ROBERT and SOPRANO SOLOIST

BELIEVE IT! (shouted as in gospel music)

ALL (ROBERT and CHORUS)

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER

DON'T ABANDON ME

WHILE MY BLOOD FLOODS THE VELVET DIRT

OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.

...CRACK... ...UH! BACK...

...CUT... ...UH! CANE...

...PULL... ...UH! MULE...

...CHOP...
...UH! COTTON...

...SPLIT... ...UH! WOOD...

(a little louder)

...CRACK... ...UH! BACK... ...CUT... ...UH! CANE...

...PULL... ...UH! MULE...

...CHOP... ...UH! COTTON...

...SPLIT... ...UH! WOOD...

...CRACK! CUT! PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT! PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT! PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!

WOMEN

(soprano soloist) BOSS IS HAPPY IN HIS BED (women's chorus) LONG AS HIS PILLOW'S DOWNEY (soprano soloist) IF I STOOD NEAR HIS SLEEPY HEAD (women's chorus) HIS FACE WOULD BE AS FLUFFY.

ROBERT and SOPRANO SOLOIST

TELL IT TO ME! (shouted as in gospel music)

ROBERT

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

CHORUS

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

ROBERT

GOING TO DANCE ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK ONE DAY.

CHORUS

ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK SOMEDAY. - One day

ALL (ROBERT and CHORUS)

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER
DON'T ABANDON ME
E MY TEARS MUDDY THE OWN.

WHILE MY TEARS MUDDY THE RICH BROWN SOIL OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER DON'T ABANDON ME WHILE MY TEARS MUDDY THE VELVET SOIL OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.

> ...CRACK... ...UH! BACK ...

...CUT... ...UH! CANE ...

...PULL... ...UH! MULE ...

...CHOP... ...UH! COTTON ...

...SPLIT... ...UH! WOOD ...

(a little louder)

...CRACK... ...UH! BACK ...

...CUT... ...UH! CANE...

...PULL... ...UH! MULE...

...CHOP... ...UH! COTTON ...

...SPLIT... ...UH! WOODCRACK! CUT! PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT! PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT! PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!

(When the dinner bell sounds, the workers wash up for supper. CILLA is waiting at MARGARET and ROBERT's cabin to welcome them home.)

CILLA

YOU LEFT THE LIGHT BEHIND YOU. DID YOU HAVE A WORRISOME DAY?

(CILLA, ROBERT, and MARGARET go inside the cabin, and begin preparing dinner.)

ROBERT

EVERY NEW DAY IS LIKE YESTERDAY.

WORK THE CROPS,

FORGET ABOUT PAY.

END EACH DAY

LIKE THE ONE BEFORE.

DON'T LEAVE THE FIELD

TIL THE LIGHT'S TOO POOR.

CILLA

THIS GAINES IS NOT LIKE THAT LAST ONE.
A MEAN STREAK RIDES HIS BROW.
THE OTHER ONE HAD A HEART SOMETIMES.
AT LEAST IT SEEMED SO TO ME.

MARGARET

NO SUCH THING AS A BOSS'S HEART. HE CAN'T WASTE THE SPACE.

ROBERT

IF HE COULD HARVEST CORN IN HIS CHEST afford / ?

ROBERT and MARGARET

(in jest, as if repeating an old joke)

HE WOULD LEASE OUT HIS OWN HEART'S PLACE!

(ROBERT and MARGARET laugh heartily)

CILLA

EASE YOURSELVES.
EASE YOURSELVES.
THE TABLE IS LAID.
THE SUPPER IS PLAIN BUT WARM.

MARGARET

YOU'VE GOT MILK AND STRAWBERRIES TOO.

(They all sit down to eat.)

"PRAYER"

CILLA

DEAR LORD IN HEAVEN.

MARGARET and ROBERT

(interjecting, as in a Responsorial)

[Blessed Lord]

CILLA

MAKE US GRATEFUL FOR OUR FOOD.

MARGARET and ROBERT

[Sweet Jesus]

CILLA

KEEP US WELL AND IN YOUR SIGHT.

MARGARET and ROBERT

[Take my hand.]

CILLA

PROTECT THOSE IN DANGER AND LET US BE GUIDED BY YOUR HEAVENLY LIGHT.

MARGARET and ROBERT

[Precious Lord...]

CILLA (alone)

AMEN.

ROBERT

(exuberantly)

YOU ARE A HUNDRED POUND BLESSING, MAMA.

MARGARET

HOW'S MY BABY? NOT CRYING FOR ME? HOW'S MY SWEETNESS? NOT MISSING ME?

CILLA

SLEEPING, MARGARET. SLEEPING. NOT A FROWN ON HER SUGAR BUTTER FACE.

ROBERT (laughing)

YOU EVER SEE A MOTHER LIKE THAT? THE CHILD SUPPOSED TO NEED THE MOTHER. NOW HERE THE MOTHER NEEDS THE CHILD MORE.

MARGARET

I NEED TO SMELL HER BREATH...

CILLA

...THE BABY NEEDS HER REST ...

MARGARET

...I NEED TO SEE HER EYES, HER SMILE.

CILLA (emphatically)

IT'S DANGEROUS, DAUGHTER,
TO LOVE TOO MUCH.
THE LORD GIVETH
AND THE LORD TAKETH AWAY.
COME TO YOUR SUPPER BEFORE YOU WAKE HER.

MARGARET

SHE IS MY SUPPER, THE FOOD OF MY HEART.

ROBERT

AND WHAT AM I? THE LEAVINGS?

MARGARET

(smiling, reaching out to ROBERT)

OH NO. OH NO.
YOU ARE THE PULSE.
WITHOUT YOU I HAVE NO HEART.

ROBERT

AND WITHOUT YOU I HAVE NO PULSE TO GIVE.

(They embrace.)

CILLA

(interrupting)

ENOUGH SAID. GO GET YOUR HEART BEFORE YOU BREAK MINE. (As CILLA and ROBERT eat dinner, MARGARET sits at the table and tenderly sings to her baby.)

"LULLABY"

MARGARET

SAD THINGS FAR AWAY SOFT THINGS COME AND PLAY

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW SLEEP IN THE HAY BABY'S GOT A DREAMING ON THE WAY

BAD THINGS FAR AWAY
PRETTY THINGS HERE TO STAY

SWEET BABY, SMILE AT ME LOVELY BABY, GO TO SLEEP

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW SLEEP IN THE HAY BABY'S GONNA DREAM THE NIGHT AWAY

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW SLEEP IN THE HAY BABY'S GONNA DREAM THE NIGHT AWAY

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW
SLEEP IN THE HAY
BABY'S GONNA DREAM ... (getting softer)
BABY'S GONNA DREAM ... (softer still)

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW
SLEEP IN THE HAY
BABY'S GOING TO DREAM THE NIGHT AWAY.

(Having eavesdropped while MARGARET sang, CASEY suddenly barges in.)

CASEY

NOT TONIGHT.
NOBODY DREAMS TONIGHT.

ROBERT

WHAT'S THAT? WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?

CASEY (snarling cynically)

WHAT'S THAT I SAY? WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?

ROBERT

EXCUSE ME, SIR. YES, SIR. WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY, SIR?

CASEY

BETTER. MUCH BETTER.
WHAT I SAY IS
NO HAPPY DARKY DREAMIN' TONIGHT.
MR. GAINES HAS OTHER PLANS... OTHER PLANS.

CILLA

WHAT PLANS, MR. CASEY?

CASEY

I'M TALKIN' TO YOUR BOY, CILLA. NOT YOU.

CASEY

(to ROBERT)

YOU HAVE BEEN RENTED OUT, BOY.
MR. GAINES WANTS YOU ON YOUR WAY TONIGHT
SO YOU'LL BE READY FOR WORK AT SUNRISE.

ROBERT

WHERE, SIR? WHERE IS HE SENDING ME?

CASEY

NOT YOUR BUSINESS TO KNOW. ONLY YOUR BUSINESS TO GO.

(pointing to the door)
THE WAGON IS ON THE ROAD.
HOP TO IT, BOY!

MARGARET

I'LL GET READY. HOLD THE BABY, MAMA.

CASEY

HOLD ON, GIRL.
YOU'LL GET READY ALL RIGHT.
BUT YOU WON'T NEED THE WAGON.

(quietly, with innuendo)

MR. GAINES WANTS YOU IN THE HOUSE, HIS HOUSE.
AIN'T THAT NICE?
NO MORE FIELD WORK.
AIN'T THAT NICE?
AIN'T THAT NICE?

YOU CAN PUT YOUR FEET UP IN HIS HOUSE ALL DAY, ALL NIGHT TOO. AIN'T THAT NICE?

(CASEY pulls a stylish housedress out of his satchel and tosses it at MARGARET.)

AIN'T THAT NICE?

(CASEY leaves.)

(ROBERT and MARGARET exchange troubled glances; CILLA rocks the baby.)

CASEY (offstage)

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW

(sung to the Lullaby's melody) DA-DA-DA-DA

SLEEP IN THE HAY ...

(he laughs derisively)

ROBERT

(erupting in rage)

SKUNK! SNAKE! SON OF A WHORE!

CILLA (agitated)

PLEASE! DON'T WAKE THE BABY.

ROBERT

YELLOWBELLY!
[THAT] SON OF A DOG!!

MARGARET

COOL DOWN, ROBERT! HE WILL HEAR YOU.

ROBERT

(angrily)

I AM A MAN! AIN'T I? AIN'T I A MAN?

MARGARET

(dreamily)

YES!
YOU ARE TO ME.
AND TO US.
BUT TO THEM,
NOT YET.

ROBERT

(frustrated, almost stuttering)

...I KNOW...
I KNOW WHAT IS ON HIS MIND.
BASTARD! THAT BASTARD!
BASTARD!

MARGARET

IT WON'T HAPPEN. IT WON'T!
BELIEVE ME! (lovingly)

with dran

ROBERT

HOW CAN YOU KNOW? HOW CAN YOU BE SURE? YOU CAN'T CONTROL A SNAKE IN HIS OWN NEST.

MARGARET

HIS DAUGHTER CAROLINE LIVES THERE TOO. HE WILL BEHAVE.

CILLA

BELIEVE HER, SON.

DON'T WORRY.

IT CAN'T BE FOR TOO LONG.

MARGARET

WE WILL FIND A WAY. STAY STRONG. HE IS NOT THE MASTER OF ME.

DUET

MARGARET

HOLD ME...

ROBERT

...HOLD ON...

MARGARET

...STAY SWEET...

ROBERT

...STAY STRONG...

MARGARET

...BE MY MOONRISE...

ROBERT

...BE MY DAWN...

MARGARET and ROBERT

YOU ARE MY SHOULDER

ROBERT YOU ARE MY SPINE

MARGARET and ROBERT

YOU ARE MY COURAGE

MARGARET

YOU ARE THE SIGN

MARGARET and ROBERT

THAT LOVE IS THE ONLY MASTER
THE HEART OBEYS
LOVE IS THE ONE MASTER
MY HEART OBEYS.

(They kiss, as Evening falls.)

MARGARET

DON'T\FORGET

ROBERT

... I WON'T PORGET ...

MARGARET

...GET READY.

ROBERT

...STAY STEADY

MARGARET

...BE MY MOONRISE ...

ROBERT

...BE MY DAWN ...

MARGARET and ROBERT

YOU ARE MY SHOULDER
YOU ARE MY SPINE
YOU ARE MY COURAGE
YOU ARE THE SIGN
THAT LOVE IS THE ONLY MASTER
THE HEART OBEYS
LOVE IS THE ONE MASTER
MY HEART OBEYS.

The scene changes to reveal EDWARD GAINES sitting in the library of Maplewood Plantation. Affecting the airs of an English aristocrat, he is elegantly dressed, drinks brandy from a snifter, and smokes an expensive cigar. CASEY, the plantation foreman, enters.

CASEY

YOU ASKED ME TO REPORT, MR. GAINES.

EDWARD

I DID. INDEED I DID. ANY PROBLEMS?

CASEY

NOTHING I COULDN'T HANDLE, SIR. A LITTLE COMMOTION AT FIRST, BUT THEY'RE QUIET NOW.

EDWARD

THE GIRL?

CASEY

IN THE KITCHEN, SIR.
HOLDING HER HEAD UP HIGH.
SHE IS FEISTY, SIR.
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK IN HER EYES.

EDWARD

LOVELY! LOVELY!

FEISTY WITH A LOOK IN HER EYES.

WAIT A MOMENT,

TELL HER I WANT HER TO COME TO ME TONIGHT.

CASEY

AT YOUR PLEASURE, SIR.

(CASEY leaves.)

ARIA

EDWARD

A LITTLE SOLACE
FOR A HARD WORKING MAN
A RUBY RED SCARF
SOOTHES A CALLOUSED HAND
SOME RESPITE FOR AN ACTIVE MIND
IS DUE, IS DUE.

THE LEOPARD'S SPOTS
ARE NOT MARKS OF SOIL
THEY ARE THE WISDOM OF NATURE'S DESIGN
THE NATURAL LANGUAGE OF ITS KIND
A CUE, IT'S TRUE.

[Possible extension to continue the Leopard symbolism ?]

A LITTLE SOLACE
FOR A HARDWORKING MAN
A LITTLE SOLACE
FOR A HARDWORKING MAN.

(Becoming increasingly self-satisfied, EDWARD anticipates his taking of MARGARET sexually. He draws from his pocket her red scarf, stroking it.)

End of Scene Two

[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE TWO]

Although Orchestral Interlude II is still "shortish," it is longer than the first, so as to break sufficiently the dramatic action and support the change in Gaines's character.

MARGARET GARNER An Opera in Three Acts

Music by Richard Danielpour

Libretto by Toni Morrison

MARGARET GARNER

Cast of Characters

Principal Roles

MARGARET GARNER*, Mezzo-Soprano an African-American slave in her mid-20s, Robert's wife

ROBERT GARNER*,

an African-American slave in his early 30s, Margaret's husband

CILLA*, Dramatic Soprano an African-American slave about 50 years old, Robert's mother

EDWARD GAINES,
the handsome and charismatic Master of Maplewood Plantation,
in his late 30s or early 40s

Secondary Roles

CASEY, the Foreman of Maplewood Plantation Dramatic Tenor

CAROLINE GAINES, the daughter of Edward Gaines, engaged to George Hancock

Light Lyric Soprano

GEORGE HANCOCK, engaged to Caroline Gaines Tenor

AUCTIONEER, a Professional Salesman Lyric or Character Tenor (doubles the role of MAYOR)

4 SLAVE CATCHERS 2 Tenors, 2 Baritones

SIMON**, the Ship's Waiter, a Freedman Baritone

2 FERRY MEN ** Baritones

OVERSEER**, responsible for the slaves on the steamship

Tenor

MAYOR (doubles the role of AUCTIONEER)

Lyric or Character Tenor

MARGARET'S TWO CHILDREN non-singing roles light-skinned, about 4 years old

Chorus of White Townspeople***

Chorus of African-American Slaves *

SATB: 40 voices (min. 32)

SATB: 32 voices (min. 20)

* Although much latitude is possible in casting, **Margaret Garner** does require that these roles be sung by African-American performers.

** These roles can be sung by members of the White Chorus.

*** It is essential that the White Choristers outnumber the African-American Choristers.

MARGARET GARNER

Synopsis

ACT I: scene i -- Kentucky, April 1856.

The opera begins in darkness. A large group of slaves gradually becomes visible, shackled and caged on a trading block. In a call-and-response song, the slaves, led by Margaret Garner, beg for deliverance from their suffering.

The scene shifts to a lively town square. In preparation for an auction, members of slave families are separated from each other, so that they can be sold individually. The local townfolks bid enthusiastically for these "picknies and mammies and breeders and bucks," even though they consider them nothing more than personal burdens in need of civilizing.

In the crowd of onlookers is a handsome, genteel man named Edward Gaines. He politely interrupts the auction when an "old estate rich in history" is brought to the block, asserting that this property, Maplewood Plantation, belonged to his deceased brother and therefore cannot be sold. As no one disputes the claim, Gaines acquires Maplewood. However, the self-assured Gaines, a native of the region but absent for twenty years, is dismayed to learn that none of the townfolks remember him, only his well-respected older brother. The younger Gaines informs them that he has survived life's challenges; once happily married, he now is a widower with a child to raise. He grandiosely proclaims that he will fill Maplewood with a multitude of possessions, and announces that he intends to retain all the plantation's "goods and property" — its slaves — together as well. Those slaves waiting to be auctioned therefore are reunited with their families.

While Gaines signs the ownership papers for Maplewood Plantation, the slaves celebrate their good fortune with dance and song. He notices, and is intrigued by, the attractive and feisty young slave woman who leads the performance, Margaret

Garner. After the crowd disperses, Gaines discovers, and takes, a red scarf that Margaret had tied around a tree. He nostalgically recalls his childhood, even though he had been forced to leave town under purportedly disreputable circumstances. He vows that the townfolks, once his neighbors, will not forget him again.

ACT I: scene ii -- Harvest time, about six months later.

Singing a wry, somewhat defiant work song, the slaves head back to their quarters after a day of working in the fields. Cilla, the mother of Margaret's husband, Robert, joins the couple for supper; their spirits are light-hearted while they prepare the evening meal. After saying grace, however, Margaret insists upon seeing her baby immediately. Cilla, warm-hearted yet world-wise, cautions her against such an intense attachment to the child, but Margaret persists and sings a Lullaby to her baby while Robert and his mother eat dinner. Suddenly, Casey, the treacherous foreman at Maplewood Plantation, bursts into the cabin and delivers the shocking news that Robert is being sent away that night to another plantation. Margaret is to remain at Maplewood, but now will work in the plantation's main house. When Casey tosses a fancy dress at Margaret, it is clear that Gaines expects sexual favors from her. Robert voices his anger, but Margaret reassures him of her faithfulness and the two pledge their love. Later that evening, after Margaret has been delivered to Maplewood, Gaines delights at the thought of taking Margaret sexually.

ACT I: scene iii -- in Edward Gaines's parlor, in the early summer of 1857.

An engagement party is taking place to celebrate the betrothal of Caroline Gaines, Edward's daughter, to George Hancock. The guests include the local townspeople, whom Edward is very eager to impress as he seeks their approval. A discussion about the nature of love develops at the party, and, not surprisingly, Gaines expresses views markedly different from those of the young lovers, Caroline

and George. For Gaines, love seems to be a duplicitous force: "a thief respecting no household, stealing the loved ones away." It is not joyous and magical for him, or protecting and nurturing, as it is for Caroline and George. Love signals a loss of control for Gaines, and talk of it is liable to trigger the immense pain he feels, but cannot articulate, over his wife's death.

In an attempt to break the tension caused by this discussion, Gaines toasts the newly engaged couple. But Caroline inadvertently makes matters worse by asking Margaret, now the house servant, for her opinions on love. The guests are outraged that a person of "quality" would ask a slave for her opinion. To show their disapproval of Gaines, and the social manners he seemingly allows at Maplewood, the haughty guests leave the party abruptly. Distressed by their rudeness, Gaines lashes out at Caroline, who ruined what he had hoped would be a proud moment; now, he claims, his neighbors have "more reason to gossip and despise" him. He dismisses her attempts to mollify him.

After the party, when Gaines notices Margaret returning to clear the glasses, he lingers in a hiding place to observe her. While she continues to muse upon the nature of love, he emerges from his hiding place and accosts her. Brandishing from his pocket the red scarf Margaret once had tied around the tree, he wraps it around her neck and drags her to his living quarters.

Act II: Scene I - Winter, four years later (January 1861).

Anticipating a visit from Robert, who has been secretly visiting her on Sunday nights, Margaret goes to Cilla's cabin. Upon arriving, however, she is puzzled to find Cilla packing a carpetbag. She becomes highly agitated when she notices that her children aren't there, and that Cilla is folding their clothing. As she has seen Casey lurking nearby, Margaret fears the worst – that he is coming for the children and

plans to sell them. Cilla tries to reassure Margaret that all is well: Robert is attending to the final details for an escape attempt that night.

When he arrives at the cabin, Margaret, whose life has been sustained by her quest for freedom, is overcome when Robert tells her that they are scheduled to leave in just three hours. She anxiously inquires about his plans for their escape and new life. A man of great courage and strength, Robert also attempts to reassure Margaret before he leaves to get the children while his mother finishes packing. Suddenly, Margaret notices that Cilla is not packing any of her own things. In spite of Margaret's pleas to join them, Cilla proclaims that she is too old to begin a new life; her joy is simply to see her son's family safe, away from this region. Although sympathetic with Margaret and Robert's dreams for a free life, Cilla has made peace with her own, and sings of her reliance upon God.

Footsteps are heard approaching, and Cilla and Margaret are terrified when Casey storms into the cabin. At the same time, Robert inadvertently walks into the trap when he returns with the children. As Casey pulls out a pistol, Robert impulsively attacks him. A violent struggle ensues, but Robert hesitates and cannot shoot Casey. Yet when a heated exchange climaxes in Casey calling Margaret a "black slut," Robert shoots Casey to death. Cilla instantly understands that Robert's action has doomed the family, and she and Margaret beg him to run, regardless of any personal danger they might be in. While Cilla drags Casey's body away, Robert and Margaret sing of their love and make plans to meet later.

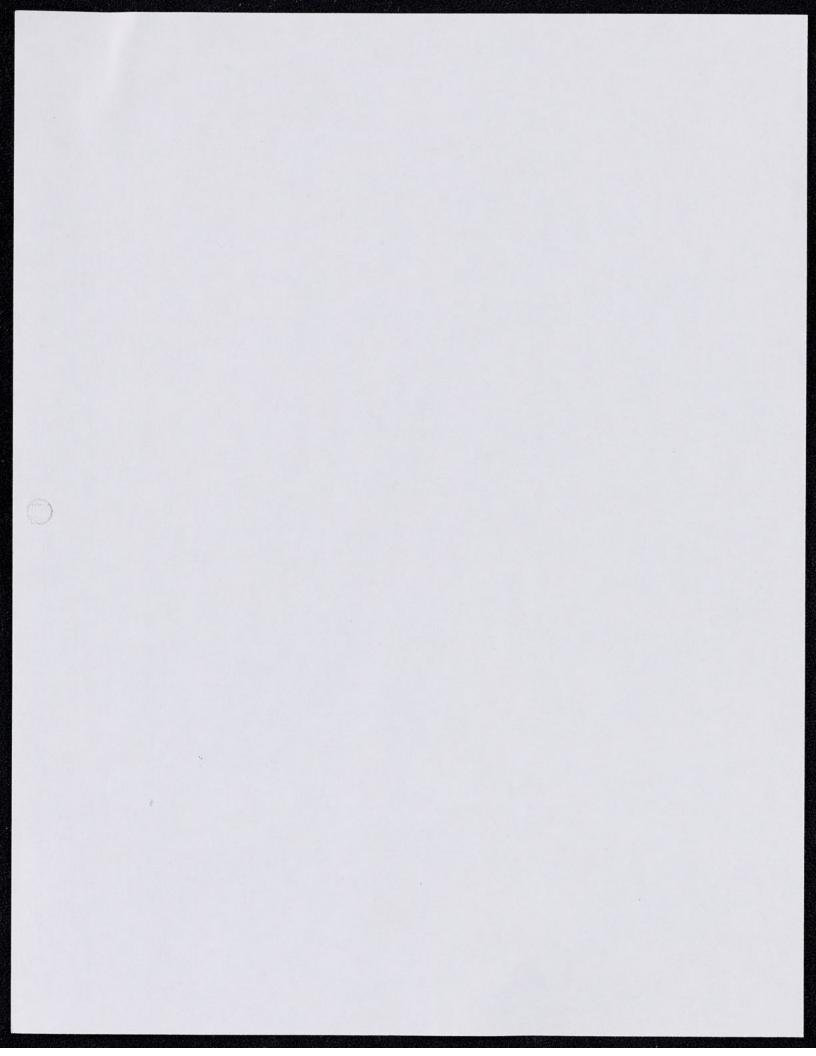
Act II: Scene ii - One week later, at twilight.

After successfully escaping their masters, Robert and Margaret have crossed the Ohio River and reached Cincinnati, a city in the Free State of Ohio. Now both outlaws, they live with their children in an underground shed to avoid recapture.

Standing outside underneath a huge elm tree as a winter storm threatens, Robert and Margaret discuss speculation about the country's new president. Margaret shudders when she hears of Lincoln's belief that the "Union is Sacred" and that a "House Divided Cannot Stand," for she knows that means war is inevitable.

Ever hopeful, and sharing Margaret's dream for a better future, Robert asserts that freedom is nearly theirs – now they are living in a state whose name means "beautiful"! Here, their children will be able to grow up with dignity, and their own marriage will be respected as sacred. He will protect Margaret always, just as the elm tree always protects them. Margaret caresses Robert's face with a leaf from the tree, around which they dance a teasing, "catch-me" dance.

Only moments after Robert suggests that they return to the shed because of potential dangers facing them outside, Edward Gaines arrives on horseback, accompanied by slave catchers. He pounds on the shed door, proclaiming that no harm will be done; he has come just to claim his property. Intoxicated, Gaines breaks down the shed door. An exchange of gunfire leaves neither man hurt, but the slave catchers rush in and tie up Robert. As Robert is being dragged outside, Gaines grabs Margaret and laments that his bed is cold; he wants her to heat it up, just as she once did with hot coals. Breaking loose, Margaret recklessly plunges her hands into the glimmering hot coals in the shed's earthen floor; she throws piece after piece of coal at him with her bare hands. Gaines yells that she can pretend to be as crazy as she likes, he doesn't care even if she mangles herself in the process. Through the window, Margaret now sees Robert standing on a tall box underneath the elm tree; a noose has been placed around his neck. Robert's cries of love to her are cut off abruptly when the box is kicked away. In the sudden stillness, Margaret pulls from her hair the leaf Robert had placed there only moments before. She holds it in her scorched hands, weeping.



Synopsis

Act I, Scene 1 -- Kentucky, April 1856

The opera begins in darkness. A large group of slaves gradually becomes visible, shackled and caged on a trading block. In a call-and-response song, the slaves, led by Margaret Garner, beg for deliverance from their suffering.

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Act I, Scene 2 -- Harvest time, about six months later

Singing a wry, somewhat defiant work song, the slaves head back to their quarters after a day toiling in the fields. Cilla, the mother of Margaret's husband, Robert, joins the couple for supper; their spirits are light-hearted while they prepare the evening meal. After saying grace, however, Margaret insists upon seeing her baby immediately. Cilla, warm-hearted yet world-wise, cautions her against such an intense attachment to the child, but Margaret persists and sings a Lullaby to her baby while Robert and his mother eat dinner. Suddenly, Casey, the treacherous foreman at Maplewood Plantation, bursts into the cabin and delivers shocking news: Robert is being sent away that night to another plantation. Margaret is to remain at Maplewood, but now will work in the plantation's main house. When Casey tosses a fancy dress at Margaret, it is clear that Gaines expects sexual favors from her. Robert voices his anger, but Margaret reassures him of her faithfulness, and the two pledge their love. Later that evening, after Margaret has been delivered to Maplewood, Gaines delights at the thought of taking Margaret sexually.

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An engagement party is taking place to celebrate the betrothal of Caroline Gaines, Edward's daughter, to George Hancock. The guests include the local townspeople, whom Edward is very eager to impress as he seeks their approval. A discussion about the nature of love develops at the party; not surprisingly, Gaines expresses views markedly different from those of the young lovers. For Gaines, love

seems to be a duplicitous force: "a thief respecting no household, stealing the loved ones away." It is not joyous and magical for him, or protecting and nurturing, as it is for Caroline and George. Love signals a loss of control for Gaines, and talk of it is liable to trigger the immense pain he feels, but cannot articulate, over his wife's death.

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Act II: Scene 2 - One week later, at twilight

After successfully escaping their masters, Robert and Margaret have crossed the Ohio River and reached Cincinnati, a city in the Free State of Ohio. Now both outlaws, they live with their children in an underground shed to avoid recapture. Standing outside underneath a huge elm tree as a winter storm threatens, Robert

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N.B. Synopsis for the Third Act of *Margaret Garner* to follow.

ACT II: Scene 3

Twilight a few days later. On the banks of the Ohio River. Two Fishermen sort gear near their moored boat.

First Fisherman

Tell me, what is real
In this tale I've been hearing.
Commotion aboard a ship? Passengers alarmed?
Lawmen called to the fray?

Second Fisherman

Dreadful! Awful! Let me tell you.

[During the following exchange the Fishermen mimic, pantomime, the action they are describing.]

Second Fisherman

Some rich men were sailing to down-river markets.

First Fisherman

Where prices for slaves are quick and high.

Second Fisherman

The slaves below deck The owners above With cards, money and Drink, drink, drink, drink.

First Fisherman

And women?

To pass the time,

To while away the night

The rich play such lovely games of chance.

Second Fisherman

One of them lost heavily And to cover his losses Wagered a slave and her children.

First Fisherman [entering the tale with glee]

Aha! The players refuse, Doubting the value of the pawn.

Second Fisherman

To show their worth
The loser orders them
Brought up to the game.
[mimes a woman strutting flirtatiously]

["Silhouettes" appear above/in back of the Fishermen downstage: Margaret and her two children standing before Edward and the gamblers. Through the balance of this scene the miming of the Fishermen and the gestures of the Silhouettes are markedly different; two versions play against each other.]

First Fisherman

The price is agreed on.
[both Fishermen shake hands]

[Margaret's hands are bandaged (from the grabbing of hot coals earlier). Gambler examines them, shakes his head–she is damaged–; Edward points to children. Player examines each: teeth, arms, legs etc. He agrees to price.]

Second Fisherman

The slave lot is dismissed.
[waves Margaret and children away]

First Fisherman

The game continues anew. [Fishermen deal cards]

Second Fisherman

That's when the slave raises her price
To a level no one can pay.
["snatches" children]

[Margaret caresses children with her bandaged hands.]

First Fisherman

What? She wants to be priceless?

Second Fisherman

She believes she is priceless.

Second Fisherman

She ran to the rail
A child in each arm.
[Fisherman runs and flings children one at a time overboard]

And let the river take them down.

[Margaret, holding children in her arms leans backward over the rail]

Both Fishermen [looking overboard]

And let the river take them down.

[Silhouettes of Margaret and children disappear; Silhouette of Edward and Gamblers gesticulating then fading]

Second Fisherman

They fish her out with a hook and a net The catch is alive and dripping wet.

First Fisherman

But the children are swept away.

First Fisherman and Second Fisherman together

What kind of mother is that?
No kind of mother
Kills her young.
No kind of mother is she.

[Silence. Then into the silence the sound of an harmonica.]

Second Fisherman

Look. That's her.

First Fisherman

Where?

Second Fisherman

Out there. On a flat bed. Tied to a pole. See?

First Fisherman

I see fog.

Second Fisherman

Look hard. A guard watches her. The oarsman pulls.

First Fisherman [Peering]

Fog takes on shapes in the wind. Makes you imagine demons and things.

Second Fisherman

The mist is breaking. See there, the lamp.

First Fisherman

Oh. Look how still she stands.

First and Second Fisherman together

Poor little monster. Hell is her only home now.

[Margaret on flatbed comes into view. Hands bandaged in thick rags, strapped to a "mast." She is singing her memories; lines from previous songs.]

Margaret

Bad things, far away Pretty things here to stay Sweet baby smile at me Lovely baby go to sleep

Go, cry girl. You have won your tears. Go cry, girl.

Will I plant a garden? It will be just so.

Do you hear them?

By the mimosa When the moon hits...

The secret soul keeps... See this tree? That is how I will always be.

[Sudden change from mourning to a fierce acceptance of her state.]

Darkness, I salute you. Reason has no power Over the disconsolate. Grief is my pleasure; Thief of life my lover, now.

[Close]

ACT II: Scene 4

Lobby of Courthouse the next day. Edward, Caroline, George.

Caroline

Father, this is madness.

Edward

Madness, yes. Hers, not mine.

George

All the more reason to spare her.

Edward

Spare her? She is a savage.
A danger to society.
Can't you see?

George and Caroline

We don't condone child murder. No human could. Edward

Then step aside.

Caroline

Father!

Edward

Let the trial begin.

Scene changes to interior of Courtroom. Caroline, George and Edward enter. Three Judges sit on raised bench. Townspeople to stage left. Militia Officers posted near Margaret who is seated in the middle of the floor.

Judges

What is the charge?

Edward

Theft, your honors.

Judges

And the value of the theft?

Edward

Hundreds, your honors. Hundreds of dollars lost.

Judges

Have the stolen goods been found?

Edward

They have, sir.

Judges

And what is the condition of these goods?

Edward [looking menacingly at Margaret]

Ruined. Useless.

Judges

How did they come to be ruined?

Edward

The accused destroyed them, your honors.

Judges

By accident or deliberately?

Edward

Deliberately.

Judges

Describe, please, the destroyed goods.

Edward

Children, sirs. Two children. Both my property.

Caroline [interrupting]

Your honors, may I speak?
The charge is false.
Not theft but murder
It should be.

Judges

That is a very different matter
Yet it comes to the same thing.
The matter before us
Is financial loss
And the guilty party who caused it.

Caroline and George

Respectfully, we beg to differ. A mother who kills her children cannot be said to steal them.

Judges

How so?

Edward [interrupting angrily]

They did not belong to her. She has no right to them Living or dead.

It is clear in our system

She owns nothing

Least of all my slaves.

Townspeople [in agitation]

Yes. Listen to him. He is right.

Judges

Order!

[into the sudden silence]

Caroline

She bore them, your honors.
They are hers until they come of age.
She is responsible for their lives.

Judges

Where have you been, Madam?
On an island in the sea?
You are speaking of a slave
Not some one like you or me.
The law is clear
In the Bible and here.
Slavery is not a matter
For the slave to judge.

Townspeople

Infanticide is savage. An unnatural crime.

George

Exactly! A crime! Where life is taken Not a bag of gold.

Caroline

If she is to die Let it be for something serious. Not a cruel joke!

George

How can you condemn her And not the crime that belittles her crime?

Judges

Where have you been, Sir?
On an island in the sea?
You are speaking of a slave
Not someone like you or me.

Townspeople

The law is clear In the Bible and here. Slavery is not a matter for A slave to judge.

George

Then let us judge it fairly.
Or we are the dangers [looking at Edward]
To civilized society.

Caroline [to Edward]

Father, Margaret is of no value to you
[looking at Margaret]
Or anyone.

She was more than a mother to me.
Now her silence screams a grief
We dare not know.

But you can change the debate
Raging the land.
Let the charge reflect
Our crimes as well as hers.

Edward

I have committed no crime.

Townspeople

He has committed no crime.
The law is clear
In the Bible and here.

Judges

We do not make laws Or forsake laws We follow them to a T. The charge is theft
The sentence is just:
This woman will be
Made ready for execution.

Townspeople [with relief]

Bound and made ready For execution She is not like you or me

> Margaret [rising]

I am not like you.

[Singing in counterpoint with the Townspeople]

Townspeople [to each other]

She is not like you or me.

Margaret

I am not like you. I am me.

Judges

You have no authority.

Margaret

You have no authority. I am not like you.

Townspeople [to each other]

She is not like you Or me.

Margaret

I am me!

[Officers take hold of Margaret. All Exit except Caroline, George and Edward]

Caroline

Father. You must urge clemency from the Court. They will listen to you.

Edward

A radical now? You defy convention.

George

Don't let her hang For the wrong reason

Edward

She must suffer the consequences Of what she has done.

Caroline and George

And so must you.

Edward

Meaning what?

Caroline

We are so at odds.
Our family, like this whole land,
Will not survive
This violent test.

Edward

Are you threatening me?

Caroline and George

No. No. We are begging you.

[Edward turns away. George and Caroline move to leave. Caroline turns to look at Edward then, impulsively, runs back to him and takes her father's hands. Holding one against her cheek, she kisses it.]

Caroline

Don't fail me. It's all in your hands.

[Exits with George]

ACT 11; Scene 5

Edward alone in spotlight. It is early morning.

Edward [examining his hands]

Nothing. I see nothing at all.

No wound, no rash.

Yet they burn.

What lights the flame?

Is it Caroline's kiss

Or Margaret's coals of fire?

[dismissing his questions]

Rot!
I am approved.
Clearly what the world insists
I should be.
Law and custom endorse me.
[re-considering]

Yet my only child Looks at me with strange eyes, Cold appraisal where naked adoration Used to live.

[aggressively] Am I not a legal man, a loving father God's blueprint Flawed in merely ordinary ways?

Hat's still tip,
Gentlewomen dip their heads courteously
To me.

Yet. Yet. [looking at his hands]

They sear like molten lead.

If the flaw is in the blueprint
Why must I choose?
[reflectively]
If the flaw is in the blueprint
Then I must choose.

Lights up revealing the Town Square at twilight. A crowd has assembled. Caroline, George, Slaves including Cilla, Townspeople. Margaret is being led up steps to a scaffold. Her hands are still bandaged (therefore no need to tie them). As she reaches the platform, she is held by the Hangman before the final three or four steps of a separate set. It is on this last step where the noose will be fixed. The Slaves are humming—no words yet—but in great dismay and sorrow. Margaret climbs the last steps. The Hangman places the noose around her neck. Suddenly (as in the first scene of Act 1) Edward enters. He is waving a document.

Edward

Hold on! Hold on!
I'm telling you hold on.
The Judges have granted clemency.
If, if the guilty party repents
Her monstrous crime,

She will be remanded To my custody.

[The Hangman moves away from Margaret to accept Edward's paper.]

Caroline [embracing her father] George [shaking his hand]

Thank God. Thank you.

Cilla [stepping forward, thrilled]

You will live, daughter. Praise my Maker, you will live.

Margaret

Oh yes. I will live. I will live
Among the cherished.
Side by side
In our own garden
Ringed by a harvest of love.
No more brutal days or nights.
Goodbye, sorrow.
Death is dead.
I live. Oh yes, I live.

[Margaret kicks away the steps and hangs herself]

Cilla

Margaret, no!

Edward, Caroline, George, et al. [reminiscent of the "No's" sung by the Slaves in Act 1, scene 1]

No! No! Please God, no.

George and Caroline

She has swallowed her trouble And left us to taste our own.

[they Exit]

Edward [stunned; calling to Caroline's back]

I chose! I chose! [then examining his hands once more]

> Yet no breeze, no cool stream Calms these palms. Unhealed, there is no peace.

> > [Exits]

During the following, Cilla's voice is distinctive, rising at times above the others. The Black and White Choruses sing the same song, occasionally with different lines. Meanwhile the Hangman lifts Margaret's body free and holds her in his arms before the Crowd. Together they seem to form a cross. As the scene proceeds, light slowly dims on the Hangman's figure and rises on Margaret's until all that is visible is her horizontal body floating alone and above everyone.

All

Sweet Jesus,

Help us break through the night.

White Chorus

Chastened by Thy holy light

Black Chorus

Guided by Thy holy light

All

Into Thy blessed sight.

White Chorus

Your justice is hard but clean.

Black Chorus

The hands of justice are not clean.

White Chorus

Your wrath is sublime.

Black Chorus

Pride is the crime.

All

Have mercy. Have mercy on me.

Cilla

Soon, soon my bold-hearted girl I'll be there. I'll be there.

Black Chorus

Break through the night Break through the night Let her linger a while And ride the light.

END

Twilight a few days later. On the banks of the Ohio River. Two Fishermen sort gear near their moored boat.

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Tell me, what is real
In this tale I've been hearing.
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Horrible! Awful! Let me tell you.

[During the following exchange the Fishermen mimic, pantomime the scene they are describing.]

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Some rich men were sailing to down-river markets.

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Where prices for slaves are quick and high.

Second Fisherman

The slaves below deck The owners above With cards, money and Drink, drink, drink.

First Fisherman

And women?

To pass the time,

To while away the night

The rich play such lovely games of chance.

Second Fisherman

One of them lost heavily
And to cover his losses
Wagered a slave and her children.

First Fisherman

Aha! The players refuse, Doubting the value of the pawn.

Second Fisherman

To show their worth
The loser orders them
Brought up to the game.

[Mimisa women Flaunting and strutting before the gamblers]

["Silhouettes" appear above/in back of the Fishermen downstage: Margaret and her two children standing before Edward and the gamblers. Through the balance of this scene the grotesque miming of the Fishermen

and the gestures of Margaret are markedly different.]
The two versions play a gainst Ruch other.

First Fisherman

The price is agreed on. [they shake hands]

Second Fisherman

The slave lot dismissed. [hand waving Margaret away]

First Fisherman

My Shakes his and Shakes his and Shakes his there had there had there had

> time feet teeth feet

The game continues anew. [dealing cards]

Second Fisherman

That's when the slave raises her price E Margaret Careus

Schildren with

bandaged harb] To a level no one can pay.

First Fisherman

What? She wants to be priceless.

Second Fisherman

She believes she is priceless.

Second Fisherman

me at a time She ran to the rail [runs and throws children overboard]

A child in each arm

And let the river take them down.

[Margaret, holding children in her arms climbs overboard]

Both Fishermen [looking overboard]

She ran to the rail A child in each arm

And let the river take them down.

Margaret/silhouette disappears]

Second Fisherman

They fish her out with a hook and a net

The catch is alive and dripping wet.

First Fisherman

But the children are swept away.

First Fisherman and Second Fisherman together

What kind of mother is that?

No kind of mother

Kills her young.

No kind of mother is she.

[Silence. Then into the silence the sound of an harmonica.]

Second Fisherman

Look. That's her.

First Fisherman

Where?

Second Fisherman

Out there. On a flat bed. Tied to a pole. Can't you see?

First Fisherman

I see fog.

Second Fisherman

Look hard. A guard watches her. The oarsman pulls.

First Fisherman

[Peering]
Fog takes on shapes in the wind.
Makes you imagine demons and things.

Second Fisherman

The mist is breaking. See there the lamp.

First Fisherman

Oh. Look how still she stands.

First and Second Fisherman together

Poor soul. Hell is her only home now.

[Margaret on flatbed comes into view. She is singing her memories; lines from previous songs.] hands bandaged, Strapped to a mast

Margaret

Bad things, far away Pretty things here to stay Sweet baby smile at me Lovely baby go to sleep

Go, cry girl. You have won your tears. Go cry, girl.

Will I plant a garden?

It will be just so.

Do you hear them?

By the mimosa When the moon hits...

The secret soul keeps...

See this tree?

That is how I will always be.

[Sudden change from mourning to a fierce acceptance of her state.]

Darkness, I salute you.
To the desperate heart
Reason has no power.
Grief is my pleasure;
The thief of life my lover, now.

ACT II Scene 4

Lobby of Courthouse. Edward, Caroline, George.

Caroline

Father, this is madness.

Edward

Madness, yes. Hers, not mine.

George

All the more reason to spare her.

Edward

Spare her? She is a danger To society. Can't you see?

George and Caroline

We don't condone what she did No human could.

Edward

Then step aside.

Caroline

Father!

Edward

Let the trial begin.

Scene changes to interior of Courtroom. Caroline, George and Edward enter. Three Judges sit on raised bench. Townspeople to stage left. Margaret seated in the middle of the floor.

Judges

What is the charge?

Edward

Theft, your honors.

Judges

And the value of the theft?

Edward

Hundreds, your honors. Hundreds of dollars lost.

Judges

Have the stolen goods been found?

Edward

They have, sir.

Judges

And what is the condition of these goods?

Edward [looking menacingly at Margaret]

Ruined. Useless.

Judges

How did they come to be ruined?

Edward

The accused destroyed them, your honors.

Judges

By accident or deliberately?

Edward

Deliberately.

Judges

Describe, please, the destroyed goods.

Edward

Children, sirs. Two children. Both my property.

Caroline [interrupting]

Your honors, may I speak?
The charge is false.
Not theft but murder
It should be.

Judges

That is a very different matter
Yet it comes to the same thing.
The matter before us
Is financial loss
And the guilty party who caused it.

Caroline and George

Respectfully, we beg to differ. A mother who kills her children cannot be said to steal them.

Judges

How so?

Edward [interrupting angrily]

They did not belong to her.

She has no right to them
Living or dead.

It is clear in our system
She owns nothing
Least of all my slaves.

Townspeople [in agitation]

Ah. Yes. Listen to him.

Judges

Order!

[into the sudden silence]

Caroline

She bore them, your honors
They are hers until they come of age
She is responsible for their lives.

Judges

Where have you been, Madam?
On an island in the sea?
You are speaking of a slave
Not some one like you or me.

The law is clear In the Bible and here. Slavery is not a matter For the slave to judge.

Townspeople

Infanticide is madness A serious crime. George

Exactly! A crime! Where life is taken Not a bag of gold.

Caroline

If she is to die Let it be for something serious. Not a cruel joke!

George

How can you condemn her And not the crime that belittles her crime?

Judges

Where have you been, sir?
On an island in the sea?
You are speaking of a slave
Not someone like you or me.

Townspeople

The law is clear
In the Bible and here.
Slavery is not a matter for
A slave to judge.

George

Then let us judge it fairly.
Or we are the dangers [looking at Edward]
To civilized society.

Caroline [to Edward]

Father, Margaret is of no value to you [looking at Margaret]
Or anyone.
She was more than a mother to me.
Now her silence tells us all.
But you can change the debate
Raging the land.
Let the charge reflect
Our crimes as well as hers.

Edward

I have committed no crime.

Townspeople

He has committed no crime.
The law is clear
In the Bible and here.

Judges

We do not make laws
Or forsake laws
We follow them to a T.
The charge is theft
The sentence is just:
This woman will be
Made ready for execution.

Townspeople [with relief]

Bound and made ready For execution

She is not like you or me

Margaret [rising]

I am not like you. I am me.

[Singing in counterpoint with the Townspeople]

Townspeople [to each other]

She is not like you or me.

Margaret

I am not like you. I am me.

Judges

You have no authority.

Margaret

You have no authority. I am not like you.

Townspeople [to each other] She is not like you Or me.

Margaret

I am me.

Margaret

I am me!

Close Officers approact surround her.

Exit Except

C. G & E.

Jaines; Loses M. & he realizes
his character is made by
Slavery, P final hymn - B & W together agree on something bad having taken place & is in the future Atherwise they disagree. Choral hypor (whites) black (single lines white tike about like words - Chant like minute

ACT II: Scene 3

Lersed by

Twilight a few days later. On the banks of the Ohio River. Two Fishermen sort gear near their moored boat.

First Fisherman

Tell me, what is real
In this tale I've been hearing.
Commotion aboard a ship? Passengers alarmed?
Lawmen called to the fray?

Second Fisherman

Horrible! Awful! Let me tell you.

action

[During the following exchange the Fishermen mimic, pantomime the scene they are describing.]

Second Fisherman

Some rich men were sailing to down-river markets.

First Fisherman

Where prices for slaves are quick and high.

Second Fisherman

The slaves below deck

With cards, money and Drink, drink, drink,

First Fisherman

And women?

To pass the time,

To while away the night

The rich play such lovely games of chance.

Second Fisherman

One of them lost heavily And to cover his losses Wagered a slave and her children.

First Fisherman [extering the tale with glee]

Aha! The players refuse, Doubting the value of the pawn.

Second Fisherman

To show their worth
The loser orders them
Brought up to the game.
[mimes a woman strutting flirtatiously]

["Silhouettes" appear above/in back of the Fishermen downstage:
Margaret and her two children standing before Edward and the gamblers.
Through the balance of this scene the miming of the Fishermen and the gestures of the silhouette are markedly different; two versions play against each other.]

First Fisherman

The price is agreed on. [fishermen shake hands]

[Margaret's hands are bandaged. Player examines them, shakes his head-she is damaged-; Edward points to children. Player examines each: teeth, arms, legs etc. He agrees to price.]

Second Fisherman

The slave lot dismissed. [hand waving Margaret away]

First Fisherman

The game continues anew. [dealing cards]

Second Fisherman

That's when the slave raises her price To a level no one can pay. I SNAtches" Children]

[Margaret caresses children with her bandaged hands.]

First Fisherman

What? She wants to be priceless.

Second Fisherman

She believes she is priceless.

Second Fisherman

She ran to the rail [tuns and flings children one at a time overboard]

A child in each arm

And let the river take them down.

[Margaret, holding children in her arms leans backward over the rail]

Both Fishermen [looking overboard]

And let the river take them down.

[Margaret and children silhouette disappears] Edward and Gamblers gesticulate,] Second Fisherman

They fish her out with a hook and a net The catch is alive and dripping wet.

First Fisherman

But the children are swept away.

First Fisherman and Second Fisherman together

What kind of mother is that? No kind of mother Kills her young. No kind of mother is she.

[Silence. Then into the silence the sound of an harmonica.]

Second Fisherman

Look. That's her.

First Fisherman

Where?

then disappear

Second Fisherman

Out there. On a flat bed. Tied to a pole. Can't you see?

First Fisherman

I see fog.

Second Fisherman

Look hard. A guard watches her. The oarsman pulls.

First Fisherman

[Peering]
Fog takes on shapes in the wind.
Makes you imagine demons and things.

Second Fisherman

The mist is breaking. See there, the lamp.

First Fisherman

Oh. Look how still she stands.

First and Second Fisherman together

Intle Monster

Poor soul. Hell is her only home now.

[Margaret on flatbed comes into view. Hands bandaged in thick rags, strapped to a "mast." She is singing her memories; lines from previous songs.]

Margaret

Bad things, far away Pretty things here to stay Sweet baby smile at me Lovely baby go to sleep

Go, cry girl. You have won your tears. Go cry, girl.

Will I plant a garden? It will be just so.

Do you hear them?

By the mimosa When the moon hits...

The secret soul keeps... See this tree? That is how I will always be.

[Sudden change from mourning to a fierce acceptance of her state.]

Darkness, I salute you. Over the To the desperate heart disconsolate

Reason has no power.

Grief is my pleasure;

Stet Thief of life my lover, now.

[Close]

ACT II Scene 4

Lobby of Courthouse. Edward, Caroline, George.

Caroline

Father, this is madness.

Edward

Madness, yes. Hers, not mine.

George

All the more reason to spare her.

Edward

Spare her? She is a danger
To society. A savage.

Can't you see?

George and Caroline

Child murder

We don't condone what she did No human could.

Edward

Then step aside.

Caroline

Father!

Edward

Let the trial begin.

Scene changes to interior of Courtroom. Caroline, George and Edward enter. Three Judges sit on raised bench. Townspeople to stage left. Molitical Officers Stand Near Judges Margaret seated in the middle of the floor.

Judges

What is the charge?

Edward

Theft, your honors.

Judges

And the value of the theft?

Edward

Hundreds, your honors. Hundreds of dollars lost.

Judges

Have the stolen goods been found?

Edward

They have, sir.

Judges

And what is the condition of these goods?

Edward [looking menacingly at Margaret]

Ruined. Useless.

Judges

How did they come to be ruined?

Edward

The accused destroyed them, your honors.

Judges

By accident or deliberately?

Edward

Deliberately.

Judges

Describe, please, the destroyed goods.

Edward

Children, sirs. Two children. Both my property.

Caroline [interrupting]

Your honors, may I speak?
The charge is false.
Not theft but murder
It should be.

Judges

That is a very different matter
Yet it comes to the same thing.
The matter before us
Is financial loss
And the guilty party who caused it.

Caroline and George

Respectfully, we beg to differ. A mother who kills her children cannot be said to steal them.

Judges

How so?

Edward [interrupting angrily]

They did not belong to her.

She has no right to them
Living or dead.

It is clear in our system
She owns nothing
Least of all my slaves.

Townspeople [in agitation]

Ah! Yes! Listen to him! It is clear!

Judges

Order!

[into the sudden silence]

Caroline

She bore them, your honors. They are hers until they come of age. She is responsible for their lives.

Judges

Where have you been, Madam?
On an island in the sea?
You are speaking of a slave
Not some one like you or me.

The law is clear In the Bible and here. Slavery is not a matter For the slave to judge. Townspeople

Infanticide is madness

A serious crime.

AN UNNATURAL

George

Exactly! A crime! Where life is taken Not a bag of gold.

Caroline

If she is to die
Let it be for something serious.
Not a cruel joke!

George

How can you condemn her And not the crime that belittles her crime?

Judges

Where have you been, sir?
On an island in the sea?
You are speaking of a slave
Not someone like you or me.

Townspeople

The law is clear In the Bible and here. Slavery is not a matter for A slave to judge.

George

Then let us judge it fairly. Or we are the dangers [looking at Edward] To civilized society.

Caroline [to Edward]

Father, Margaret is of no value to you [looking at Margaret] Or anyone.

She was more than a mother to me.

Now her silence tells us . every thing a grief ut you can change the debate we can not know But you can change the debate

Raging the land. Let the charge reflect Our crimes as well as hers.

Edward

I have committed no crime.

Townspeople

He has committed no crime. The law is clear In the Bible and here.

Judges

We do not make laws Or forsake laws We follow them to a T. The charge is theft The sentence is just:

Screaming a grief me Cannot Know. This woman will be Made ready for execution.

Townspeople [with relief]

Bound and made ready For execution She is not like you or me

Margaret [rising]

I am not like you.
I am me.

[Singing in counterpoint with the Townspeople]

Townspeople [to each other]

She is not like you or me.

Margaret

I am not like you. I am me.

Judges

You have no authority.

Margaret

You have no authority. I am not like you.

Townspeople [to each other]

She is not like you Or me.

Margaret

I am me.

[Officers surround Margaret. All exit except Caroline, George and Edward]

Caroline

Father. You must urge clemency from the Court. They will listen to you.

George

Don't let her hang For the wrong reasons.

Edward

She must suffer the consequences Of what she has done.

Caroline and George

And so must you.

Edward

Meaning what?

-> over

Edward You spit on tradition You defy Convention! (A radical Now?

Caroline We are so at odds. Our family will not survive I like this Country
This violent test. Edward Are you threatening me? Caroline and George We are begging you. [Caroline takes Edwards hands, leans in to kiss them.] holds one to her Cheel then 1635es it It's all in your hands. [Exit] Edward turns away. George and Carloive

9' 17

ACT 11; Scene 5

Edward alone in spotlight. It is early morning.

Edward [examining his hands]

Nothing. I see nothing at all. No wound, no rash. Yet they burn. What lights the flame? Is it Caroline's kiss Or Margaret's coals of fire?

[dismissing his questions]

Rot!
I am approved.
Clearly what the world insists
I should be.
Law and custom endorse me.

[re-considering]
Yet my only child
Looks at me with strange eyes,
Cold appraisal where naked adoration
Used to live.

[aggressively]
Am I not a legal man, a loving father

God's blueprint Flawed in merely ordinary ways?

Hat's still tip, Gentlewomen dip their heads courteously To me.

Yet. Yet. [looking at his hands] They sear like molten lead.

If the flaw is in the blueprint Why must I choose? [reflectively] If the flow is in the blueprint Then I must choose.

Lights up revealing the Town Square at twilight. A crowd has assembled. Caroline, George, Slaves including Cilla, Townspeople. Margaret is being led up steps to a scaffold. Her hands are still bandaged (therefore no need to tie them). As she reaches the platform, she is held by the Hangman before the final three or four steps of a separate set. It is on this last step where the noose will be fixed. The Slaves are humming—no words yet—but in great dismay and sorrow. Margaret climbs the last steps. The Hangman places the noose around her neck. Suddenly (as in the first scene of Act 1) Edward enters. He is waving a document.

Edward

Hold on! Hold on!
I'm telling you hold on.
The Judges have granted clemency.
If, if the guilty party repents
Her savage crime Monthus
She will be remanded
To my custody.

[The Hangman moves away from Margaret to accept Edward's paper.]

Good bole, Sorrons

Caroline [embracing her father] George [shaking his hand]

Thank God. Thank you.

Cilla

[stepping forward]

You will live, daughter.

Praise my Maker, you will live.

Margaret

Oh yes. I will live. I will live

Among the cherished.

Side by side

In our own garden

Ringed by a harvest of love.

No more brutal days or nights.

Death is dead.

I live. Oh yes, I live.

[Margaret kicks away the steps and hangs herself]

Cilla

Margaret, no!

Edward, Caroline, George, et al. [reminiscent of the "No's" sung by the Slaves in Act 1, scene 1]

No! No!

Please God, no.

[INSetPt-pack page]

Edward	
[stunned: then examining his hands once more]	
I chose! I chose to Caroline's b	ack
Tet no breeze, no cool stream	
Can calm these palms.	
Unhealed, there is no peace.	

During the following, Cilla's voice is distinctive, rising at times above the others. The Black and White Choruses sing the same song, occasionally with different lines. Meanwhile the Hangman lifts Margaret's body free and holds her in his arms before the Crowd. Together they seem to form a cross. As the scene proceeds, light slowly dims on the Hangman's figure and rises on Margaret's until all that is visible is her horizontal body floating alone and above everyone.

All

[Exits]

Sweet Jesus, Help us break through the night.

White Chorus

Chastened by Thy holy light

Black Chorus

Guided by Thy holy light

All

Into Thy blessed sight.

White Chorus

Your justice is hard but clean.

Black Chorus

The hands of justice are not clean.

White Chorus

Your wrath is sublime.

Black Chorus

Pride is the crime.

All

Have mercy. Have mercy on me.

Cilla

Soon, soon my bold-hearted girl I'll be there. I'll be there.

Black Chorus

Break through the night Break through the night Let her linger a while And ride the light.

END

George and Caroline swallowed

She to the world's her I nouble. Leaves left it To those of us teft behind. Elooling at each other Left it for us to taste. for good. Left us to taste our own. [EXIT]

bring down the light.

[The Hangman moves away from Margaret to accept Edward's paper.]

Caroline [embracing her father] George [shaking his hand]

Thank God. Thank you.

Cilla

You will live, daughter. Praise my Maker, you will live.

Margaret

Oh yes. I will live. I will live
Among the cherished.
Side by side
In our own garden
Ringed by a harvest of love.
No more brutal days or nights.
Death is dead.
I live. Oh yes, I live.

[Margaret kicks away the steps and hangs herself]

Cilla

Margaret, no!

Edward, Caroline, George, et al. [reminiscent of the "No's" sung by the Slaves in Act 1, scene 1]

No! No! Please God, no.

[In the following, Cilla's voice is distinctive, rising at times above the others.

Sdward

I Holding his hands What will it take To make them heal to calm these palms en flamed

I there wo will be the him him here with the wing

The Black and White Choruses sing the same song, occasionally with
different lines. Meanwhile the Hangman lifts Margaret's body free and
holds her in his arms before the Crowd. Together they seem to form a
cross + As the scene proceeds, light slowly dimon Hangman
until, finally, rise on Margaret until all that is don't
All risible is her horizontal body floating above;

Sweet Jesus, Help us break through the night.

White Chorus

Chastened by Thy holy light

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Guided by Thy holy light

All

Into Thy blessed sight.

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Your justice is hard but clean.

Black Chorus

The hands of justice are not clean.

White Chorus

Your wrath is sublime.

Black Chorus

Pride is the crime.

All

Have mercy. Have mercy on me.

Cilla

Soon, soon my bold-hearted girl I'll be there. I'll be there.

Black Chorus

Break through the night
Break through the night
I want to be there when you
Bring down the light.

Let her while And Ride the light.

5

Edward Alone in Spotlight on Stage

Edward [examining his hands]

Nothing. I see nothing at all. No wound, No rash,

Yet they burn.

What lights the flame?

Is it Caroline's kiss Margaret's

Or the Slave-woman's coals of fire?

[dismissing his questions]

Rot! Insert "I am ap proved! Law and custom endorse me.

[re-considering]
Yet my only child
Looks at me with strange eyes,
Cold appraisal where naked adoration
Used to live.

[aggressively]
Am I not a legal man, a loving father?
God's blueprint
Flawed in merely ordinary ways?

Hat's still tip, Gentlewomen dip their heads courteously To me.

Yet. Yet. [looking at his hands]

They sear like molten lead.

twot Clearly what what soci the world rsts I should be lam approved How can I choose? If the flaw is in the Blue print of the flow is in the Blue print Then I must choose 2

MARGARET

STAY, SWEET.

ROBERT

STAY STRONG.

MARGARET

BE MY MOONRISE.

ROBERT

BE MY DAWN.

MARGARET and ROBERT

(together)

YOU ARE MY SHOULDER.

ROBERT

YOU ARE MY SPINE.

MARGARET and ROBERT

(together)

YOU ARE MY COURAGE.

MARGARET

AND YOU ARE THE SIGN

MARGARET and ROBERT

(together)

THAT LOVE IS THE ONLY MASTER
THE HEART OBEYS;
LOVE IS THE ONLY MASTER
THAT MY HEART OBEYS.

(Margaret and Robert now stand on opposite ends of the stage.)

Mangaret Carner 2002

ACT II: Scene 3

[Dawn the next morning. On the banks of the Ohio River. Two Fishermen.]

First Fisherman

Tell me, what is the truth

IN Of this tale I've been hearing.

Commotion aboard a ship. Passengers alarmed.

Lawmen called to the fray.

Second Fisherman

Horrible! Awful! Let me tell you.

[During the following dialogue the Fishermen mimic, pantomime the scene they are describing.]

Second Fisherman

Some rich men were sailing to down-river markets.

First Fisherman

Where prices for slaves are quick and high.

Second Fisherman

The slaves below deck The owners above With cards, money and Drink, drink, drink.

First Fisherman

To pass the time, you know. To While away the night

Such lovely The rich play games of chance.

Second Fisherman

One of them lost heavily And to cover his losses Wagered a slave and her children.

First Fisherman

The players refuse.

Doubting the value of the pawn.

Second Fisherman

To show their worth The loser ordered them

Brought up to the game.

[Silhouette appears. Margaret and her two children standing before Edward and the gamblers. Through the balance of this scene the grotesque miming of the Fishermen and the gestures of Margaret are markedly different.]

First Fisherman

The price is agreed on. I handshake 7

Second Fisherman

The slave lot dismissed. [hand waving M away]

First Fisherman

The game continues anew. (Afrest?) [dealing cards]

Second Fisherman

That's when the slave raises her price

To a level no one can pay.

First Fisherman

What s She wants to be priceless.

Second Fisherman

She believes she is priceless

She ran to the rail

She ran to the rail

A child in each arm

And let the river take them down.

The rand Second Fisherman together

A child in each arm

Children overboard

Child clembs

Overboard)

A child in each arm

A let the river take them down. Slookers [Silhouette reveals Margaret throwing her children, then jumping in after them.]

11

Second Fisherman

They fish her out with a hook and a net The catch is alive and dripping wet.

First Fisherman

But the children are swept away.

First Fisherman and Second Fisherman together

What kind of mother is that? No kind of mother

(M. Silhovette disappears)

Kills her young. No kind of mother is she.

[Silence. Then into the silence the sound of an harmonica.]

Second Fisherman

Look. That's her.

First Fisherman

Where?

Second Fisherman

Out there. On a flat bed. Tied to a pole. Can't you see?

First Fisherman

I see fog.

Second Fisherman

Look hard. A guard watches her. The oarsman pulls.

demons and.

First Fisherman

[Peering]

Fog takes on shapes in the wind.

Makes you imagine terrible things.

Second Fisherman

The mist is breaking. See there the lamp.

First Fisherman

Oh. Look how still she stands.

First and Second Fisher man together

Poor soul. Hell is her only home now.

[Margaret on flatbed comes into view. She is singing her memories; all lives hearing voices from previous songs.]

Margaret

Bad things, far away Pretty things here to stay Sweet baby smile at me Lovely baby go to sleep

Robert's voice

Go, cry girl. You have won your tears. Go cry, girl.

Children's voices

Mother. Come to us Mother.

Margaret

Will I plant a garden?

Robert's voice

It will be just so.

to harmonica player Trustically I Children's voices Mother. Mother. Robert's voice By the mimosa When the moon hits... Margaret The secret soul keeps Robert's voice See this tree? That is how I will always be. Margaret [in a musical reference to the Stephen Foster song.] I'm coming. I'm coming. With a heart purged clean of grief I hear your gentle voices calling... Children's voices Mother. Mother. Margaret I'm coming. I'm coming [Harmonica music closes the scene.]

true the franches takeable whis takeable

and I can Know

When A desperate
Alty Crumbling heart

15 Durged

Swept clean I grief

Fiscapes the theif

of reason

When a Crumbling —

Then it can know

ACT II Scene 4

Three Judges, Edward Gaines, Caroline and George, Margaret,

I Courthouse lobby A

Townspeople. Courtroom and its lobby. Edward, Caroline and George are huddled in the lobby.]

Caroline

Father, this is madness.

Edward

Madness, yes. Hers, not mine.

George

All the more reason to spare her.

Edward

Spare her? She is a danger To civilized society.

Can't you see?

George and Caroline

We don't condone what she did No human could.

Edward

Then step aside.

Caroline

Father!

Edward

Let the trial begin.

Caroline Cooge enter.

Caroline Edward enter.

The Judge.

[Scene changes to interior of Courtroom.] The Judges sit on raised bench. Townspeople to stage left. Margaret seated in the middle of the floor]

Judges

What is the charge?

Edward

Theft, your howors.

Judges

And the value of the theft?

Edward

Hundreds, your honors. Hundreds of dollars lost.

Judges

Have the stolen goods been found?

Edward They have Yes, sir. Judges

And what is the condition of these goods?

Edward

[Menacingly to.
[Tooking at Margaret]

Ruined. Useless.

Judges

How did they come to be ruined?

Edward

The accused destroyed them, your honors.

Judges

By accident or deliberately?

Edward

Deliberately,

Judges

Describe, please, the destroyed goods.

Edward

Children, sirs. Two children. Both my property.

Caroline [Interrupting]

Your honors, may I speak? The charge is false. Not theft but murder It should be.

Judges

That is a very different matter Yet it comes to the same thing. The matter before us Is financial loss And the guilty party who caused it.

Caroline and George

Respectfully We beg to differ. A mother who kills her children cannot be said to steal them.

Judges

How so?

Edward [interrupting angrily]

They did not belong to her. She has no right to them Living or dead. It is clear by our system She own nothing [Ah's. No's. Yesses from Townspeople] Lease of all my slaves.

Judges

Order!

10

Caroline [in the sudden sitence]

She bore them, your honors They are hers until they come of age She is responsible for their lives.

Judges

Where have you been, Madam? On an island in the sea? You are speaking of a slave Not some one like you or me.

The law is clear In the Bible and here. Slavery is not a matter For the slave to judge.

Townspeople

Infanticide is madness A serious crime.

George

Exactly! A crime! Where life is taken Not a bag of gold.

Caroline

If she is to be condemned Let it be truly serious.

Not a joke!

for something

George

How can you condemn her And not the crime that belittles her crime?

Judges

Where have you been, sir?
On an island in the sea?
You are speaking of a slave
Not someone like you or me.
The law is clear
In the Bible and here.
Slavery is not a matter for
A slave to judge.

ator Town speople join

George

Then let us judge it fairly.

Or we are the dangers [looking at Edward]

To civilized society.

Caroline [to Edward]

Father, Margaret is of no value to you [looking at Margaret] or anyone.

She was more than a mother to me.

Now her silence tells us all.

But you can change the debate

Raging the land.

Let the charge reflect

Our crimes as well as hers.

Edward

I have committed no crime.

Townspeople

He has committed no crime. The law is clear In the Bible and here. Unforgivable Judges (Onder We do not make laws Or forsake laws We follow them to a T. The charge is theft The sentence is just: This woman will be Made ready for execution. Townspeople [with relief] Bound and made ready For execution She is not like you or me Margaret [rising] I am not like you I am me. [Singing in counterpoint with the Townspeople] She is not like you or me Towns people I am not like you, I am me. Margaret You have no authority. Judges
You have no authority. Margaret

I am not like you Margaret
She is not like you are beaple to each ther]
Or me.

Or me.