

I AM VIRGINIA

Written by:

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Story by:

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I AM VIRGINIA

SUPER:

"The following is based on the true story of Anthony Johnson and John Casor."

SOUNDTRACK:

Throughout the movie, intermittently, the sound of a solo lute, and/or lute/wind duet, played in the renaissance style, provides mood, as per direction.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPER: 1641

Eighteen-year-old VIRGINIA JOHNSON gallops along her beach, atop her horse, equipped with a standard man's saddle. She hugs the animal tightly as she rides.

She is wearing white, elegant seventeenth-century undergarments, which contrast against her brown African skin. Her long brown ringlets dance freely behind her head.

Virginia brings her horse to a halt and turns to see her sister ELIZABETH down the beach, waving her arms. She kicks the horse and gallops back toward her sister.

The two Johnson sisters both possess striking beauty. Elizabeth's conservative renaissance hairstyle contrasts with Virginia's flowing locks.

Virginia is a complex alpha personality; an inspired, iconoclastic and imperfect leader.

She dismounts.

ELIZABETH

How is it you ride so, as a man does, and without your dress.

VIRGINIA

Who is there to know? The gulls?

ELIZABETH

What if the Spanish were to land and come ashore? What then?

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You don't want them getting their hands on you. Or perhaps you do.

VIRGINIA

Such a vulgar notion. Get on. Try it. You will have knowledge of the horse, as I have...

(playfully)

Biblical knowledge.

ELIZABETH

Ginny, you are so delightfully devilish. There is news. He has gone for him. Daddy has left for the colony, just now.

VIRGINIA

He's done it! Oh, I do wonder what he'll be like. Tall, strong.

ELIZABETH

Ginny, he's not a suitor. He's a servant, and a heathen. They'll probably have to chain him just to maintain control over him.

VIRGINIA

He will be my servant. And I will need no chains.

EXT. DOCKSIDE - DAY

A ship is in the process of unloading people and goods. ANTHONY JOHNSON is speaking to the ship's CAPTAIN. As they converse, Anthony sizes up his new African-born servant.

The forty-one-year-old Anthony Johnson has a sturdy build. His short-cropped African hair is showing signs of early gray. He has an executive aura about him, as if he's the man in charge.

JOHN CASOR is standing nearby, grasping a small, woolen satchel. He appears about twenty years of age.

He is tall, with a pleasant face, and is built like an Olympic athlete. His hair is long and natural, and severely disheveled.

CAPTAIN

You've made a fine choice here with this one. Had him nearly a year now.

ANTHONY

Cause any trouble?

CAPTAIN

Not a lick of trouble out of him. Gentle giant he is. Picked him up from the Arabs near Gibraltar. Had him in London for a bit. Took him right out on the streets. One woman come up, shoved a bible up in his face. Started speaking some sort of nonsense. Put a big grin on his face.

ANTHONY

What's his name?

CAPTAIN

Got him down as John Casor. But he says his name...

He motions for John Casor to come closer.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(to John Casor)

Tell him your name, your African name.

JOHN CASOR

Dongkasur.

CAPTAIN

(shrugs)

Lieutenant wrote John Casor.

ANTHONY

Know any English?

CAPTAIN

Oh, best part. Knows plenty of words already. Learns fast, he does. Wouldn't leave us alone, wanting to know the word for this and that. Fit right in with the other men. Thought about keeping him. Make a fine seaman.

ANTHONY

His destiny lies on the land. John Casor is going to plant tobacco.

He pulls out his coin pouch.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Sixty pounds you say. Not thirty?

CAPTAIN
No contract on this one. Do with
him as you like. Keep him for life
if it so pleases you.

ANTHONY
Very well then, sixty it is.

Anthony hands him the coins. The captain pockets the coins
and shows him a piece of paper.

CAPTAIN
Bill of sale. Got your name right
there. Anthony Johnson.

He folds it in half and hands it to Anthony. Anthony folds it
in half again and goes to place it into his coat pocket.
Unbeknownst to him, it doesn't nest securely into the pocket
and falls to the ground.

The captain salutes and walks away.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
All right then mate.

Anthony motions to John Casor.

ANTHONY JOHNSON
Come on.

Anthony turns and walks off. John Casor picks up the piece of
paper, places it into his pocket and follows Anthony.

EXT. VIRGINIA WATERWAY - DAY

John Casor is rowing Anthony's boat toward Northampton as the
two men become better acquainted.

ANTHONY
Dongo. Dongo is your homeland?

JOHN CASOR
Yes, the hills.

ANTHONY
I remember. From a large tribe?

JOHN CASOR
No, small. I was chief.

ANTHONY

How is it you were chief?

JOHN CASOR

I was the oldest. When soldiers come through, they take the oldest, the tallest. But I climbed trees. I taught my tribe to climb trees. We had many we carved, so we could climb very fast.

ANTHONY

But they caught you.

JOHN CASOR

Yes, dogs, they cut down the tree, then ropes.

Anthony takes a moment to process.

ANTHONY

You'll be happy here. Virginia is a new world. Exciting place to live.

JOHN CASOR

It is very beautiful here.

ANTHONY

Yes. When I arrived in Virginia, I served a man named Richard Bennet. Fine gentleman. Puritan. Helped me get my start. Helped a lot of men get their start. In Northampton, I have a dozen neighbors, all landowners, every one of them came from the same place you and I did. Bennet gave each man his own ground to work. Eventually, that land became mine. Fifty acres. Now my family, my sons and I, we own nearly a thousand acres.

He thinks, then corrects himself.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

My elder daughter, she also owns land. You'll live with the other servants. They're all Englishmen, white men. They know you're coming. I'm going to have you help out around the house. Always things to do. My sons and I are too busy. Everybody said they wanted an African servant.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

So, that's why I got you. When you're not busy helping the family, you'll work on the farm. My product is the best there is. Finest tobacco grown anywhere in the New World.

JOHN CASOR

We grew tobacco. We grew many things.

ANTHONY

Corn?

JOHN CASOR

I've grown corn my whole life. We had many fruit trees.

ANTHONY

Could you help me develop an orchard?

JOHN CASOR

If you give me one fruit tree, I will turn it into an orchard.

ANTHONY

Good! We'll start an orchard.

The two men pause to imagine their future orchard.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

One day, you'll have your own land. You'll be able to work when you please and play when you please. Virginia is a land of opportunity for all, no matter where a man comes from, or how he gets here.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

The Johnson family lives in a modest, five-bedroom English manor house. The grounds are nicely landscaped with flower beds and shrubs beneath a scattering of shade trees.

Anthony is instructing two white servants, with John Casor standing nearby.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Virginia and Elizabeth are spying out of a front window, observing John Casor's arrival.

VIRGINIA

He is quite large. Are they all so large, so tall, I wonder?

ELIZABETH

His hair is absolutely abominable.

VIRGINIA

Frightening.

ELIZABETH

We will have to make some accommodation with the hair.

VIRGINIA

Yes. I have a plan.

ELIZABETH

Oh, I do so love your plans.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Anthony is completing his instructions to the men.

ANTHONY

He'll catch on. Go through everything, show him all of it.

The three men begin their return to the fields.

SERVANT

All right then, Master Johnson. He's a big fellow. Should be good for a day's work.

INT. JOHNSON STABLE - DAY

Virginia and Elizabeth, in simple dresses, have John Casor sitting up on a barrel with his shirt off, as they shave his head. Half of his hair is gone and half remains.

VIRGINIA

He is terribly dirty.

She reaches for a nearby rag, then hands it to Elizabeth.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Here, wipe his body down with this.

Elizabeth plunges the rag into a bucket of water.

ELIZABETH

Do I dare? He is filthy.

Before Elizabeth has a chance to begin wiping him down, Anthony suddenly appears in the doorway.

ANTHONY

What in the name of heaven and earth? I went out to check on him, and they said the two of you marched him off somewhere.

VIRGINIA

We simply must rid him of this awful hair. It's a briar patch.

ELIZABETH

Dreadful.

ANTHONY

You're shaving him? I didn't buy John for you to serve him. I bought him to serve us.

VIRGINIA

We're just showing him how. He can shave himself from now on.

ANTHONY

Well, finish all of this up.
(to John Casor)
As soon as they're done, back to work.

Anthony walks off in a huff.

Virginia peers out of the doorway to ensure that Anthony is gone. She hands the rag to Elizabeth.

VIRGINIA

(to Elizabeth)

Here. He's gone.

Elizabeth begins wiping him down, a bit apprehensively, but attentively.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

So, your name is John?

JOHN CASOR

Dongkasur.

VIRGINIA

John Casor, yes I know. But wouldn't you prefer to be called John? I mean, John is your first name and Casor is your last name.

ELIZABETH

You see we have two names. A first, and a last.

JOHN CASOR

I have one name. Dongkasur. Why do you need two names?

ELIZABETH

(to Virginia)

That's his African name.

VIRGINIA

Oh, I see. But you must have an English name. You're in Virginia now, and everyone has English names. Henceforth, we will call you John Casor.

ELIZABETH

Does your African name have some meaning?

JOHN CASOR

Dongkasur means gently falling rain.

Virginia and Elizabeth share a smile.

VIRGINIA

(to John Casor)

My name is Virginia. You will address me as Miss Virginia. But not always. When you and I are alone together, or with Lizzy, you will address me as Miss Ginny. Do you understand?

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

Very good. Now Elizabeth is my sister. You will address her as Miss Elizabeth, but not always.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

When you are alone with her, or with the two of us, you will address her as Miss Lizzy. Do you understand?

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

You must try not to make mistakes. When you make mistakes, you will be punished.

ELIZABETH

Ginny!

VIRGINIA

He'll be fine. So, the Scarboroughs. A fortnight hence. Isn't it exciting?

ELIZABETH

Yes. Mummy and Daddy are ecstatic. And it will be a dual announcement? Still?

VIRGINIA

Yes, but do be discreet. No one is to know.

ELIZABETH

Daddy still does not?

VIRGINIA

Mummy yes, Daddy no. William's father will speak to Daddy, and then the announcement. After yours, of course.

ELIZABETH

He will be thoroughly thrilled. William Tucker is the most eligible bachelor in all of Virginia. They own four thousand acres!

VIRGINIA

Four thousand, five hundred!

They laugh giddily.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are seated at a table behind the house as she teaches him the alphabet. She has a long scroll of paper rolled out with all of the letters, plus quill, ink, and blank paper.

VIRGINIA

Each letter has its own sound. Like nose, for example.

She touches his nose lightly, then writes out the word.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

N. O. S. E. You see? The word nose has four letters. The first letter is N - nn. The second letter is O. Just like it sounds. Then S, then E. Now, there are two types of letters. Vowels and consonants. Vowel sounds are made with the mouth open. A, E, I, O, U. Consonants...

Elizabeth walks up and sits next to Virginia.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Oh good. Now, you're a boy. B, O, Y. 'B' is a consonant.

She writes it out.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

You see? And, I'm a girl.
(writes)
G, I, R, L. 'G' is another consonant.

ELIZABETH

But together, we're girls.

VIRGINIA

So, when there is more than one of something, you add 'S' on the end, like this. One girl...

ELIZABETH

Two girls.

JOHN CASOR

(to Virginia)
Why are you showing me this?

VIRGINIA

Well, because you need to know.
You need to be able to read things.

ELIZABETH

Everything that's official is put
into writing.

Their mother, MARY JOHNSON, walks up and joins them.

Mary dresses the same way any wife of an affluent Virginia planter would dress with one difference. She wraps her natural African hair in a turban of colorful fine silk, giving her a distinct personal flair.

MARY JOHNSON

Explain this to your father.

ELIZABETH

Too stubborn. We tried.

MARY JOHNSON

(to John Casor)
Pay attention. This is important.

EXT. SETTLEMENT DOCKSIDE - DAY

Virginia, Elizabeth, and John Casor are walking away from the dock area toward the settlement. Virginia and Elizabeth are dressed elegantly. John Casor, dressed in English working-class garb, walks a pace behind the women.

VIRGINIA

(to Elizabeth)

I do hope we haven't missed the ceremony.

(to John Casor)

Today is Landing Day. We celebrate the founding of Jamestown each year.

EXT. OPEN MEADOW - DAY

A crowd of settlers has gathered for the Landing Day opening ceremony. A SPEAKER, standing on a short dais, is welcoming the crowd. Virginia is seated near the front on a bench, surrounded by Elizabeth and friends.

SPEAKER

Thirty-four years ago today, the Godspeed, Discovery, and Susan Constant delivered the very first

(MORE)

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

Englishmen here, to our beautiful land, Virginia, to begin a new life in the new world. Today, we're honoring some of Virginia's founding souls. Joseph Robinson, third-born child of Virginia, please join me.

JOSEPH, a nineteen-year-old boy, rises and joins the speaker on the dais. They shake hands.

As the speaker's voice continues in the background, while he welcomes the fourth-born child, a little white girl named SARAH approaches Virginia and tugs on her sleeve.

SARAH

You're Virginia Johnson.

VIRGINIA

Yes I am. And who might you be?

SARAH

Sarah Cromwell. My sister speaks of you.

VIRGINIA

And I of her. And now, I will speak of you.

Sarah is embarrassed and runs off.

Another white girl, about eighteen years of age, has also joined the speaker and Joseph on stage.

SPEAKER

We are also fortunate to have with us today, the seventh-born child of Virginia, Miss Virginia Johnson.

The crowd applauds. The boys in the crowd cheer respectfully. Virginia rises and joins the speaker on the dais. Sarah approaches with a bouquet and hands it to Virginia.

EXT. SETTLEMENT - DAY

Virginia is strolling with Elizabeth and their white girlfriends. A crowd of boys is gathering behind them. John Casor lags behind, carrying the bouquet.

VIRGINIA

We must all attempt to give each boy ample attention. If one is left out he will feel badly.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

We must always do our utmost to
keep the boys cheerful, raise their
spirits.

INT. TANNER'S SHOP - DAY

THOMAS, a handsome teenage boy, is working with his father
and brother in their open-air shop. Thomas' friend runs up.

THOMAS' FRIEND

Virginia Johnson. She's here!

Thomas rips off his apron and turns to his father.

THOMAS

(excited)

I must away.

Thomas' father and brother watch him run off.

THOMAS' FATHER

(shaking head)

Virginia Johnson.

EXT. SETTLEMENT - DAY

Virginia, Elizabeth, and their pretty white girlfriends, AMY,
KATHERINE, and JULIANNE, are now completely surrounded by
boys. The girls are doing their best to make eye contact with
all of them.

Virginia has a rolled-up whip tucked in her waist. John Casor
is close by.

VIRGINIA

(to the group)

The girls and I have devised a
scheme, to help everyone. It's so
unfair for you boys, not to all
have maids of your own. Now, the
idea is a bit tricky, but could
still provide a most satisfactory
solution.

JULIANNE

Ginny, we must all know about that,
in your waist. It cannot be a whip,
pray tell. Say it is not for your
negro.

VIRGINIA

It is not for him, that is, if he behaves. He is, after all, a heathen, and quite unpredictable.

A buzz radiates through the group. Two boys behind Virginia shove a skinny boy through the crowd, who suddenly finds himself facing Virginia.

BOYS IN CROWD

This one's a misbehavior Miss Virginia, and unpredictable as can be! Wants a piece of your whip, he does.

The group roars with laughter. The skinny boy slinks off.

KATHERINE

(to Elizabeth)

Tell us Lizzy, you must. Does your sister truly whip her man?

ELIZABETH

Why don't we ask John Casor?

VIRGINIA

John Casor, come closer.

Still holding the bouquet, he moves to her side.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Katherine has a question for you. And you must answer truthfully else, you will suffer consequences.

KATHERINE

Has Miss Virginia ever struck you with her whip?

JOHN CASOR

Yes miss.

Amy and Katherine scream with shock and disbelief, then run off together, holding their mouths. Nearby settlers wonder what the commotion is about.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Virginia enters a church as two women are leaving.

WOMAN

Oh Virginia, hail and well met! And how is your mother? Is she here?

VIRGINIA

No, regrettably, the journey is tiresome.

WOMAN

It is such a comfort, seeing you in church. You surely bring the angels with you.

Virginia smiles and the women leave the church. Virginia sits in the back pew, in the corner.

Thomas, the tanner's son, cautiously enters the church and joins Virginia.

THOMAS

You are so generous to spend some minutes with me.

VIRGINIA

Of course Thomas. And you are equally generous.

Thomas gathers up his courage.

THOMAS

Miss Virginia, you are the most admired girl in Virginia, and I know there are many others who have sought your affections.

Virginia squeezes his hand gently.

VIRGINIA

Thomas.

THOMAS

And I do realize that as the son of a tanner, I stand little chance of winning your affections.

VIRGINIA

Thomas.

THOMAS

I have for so long imagined you, being with you, together...but I would never ask my father to relay my thoughts, or my intentions to your father, out of respect for you. So, I am relaying my thoughts now, here, with you. I know...

VIRGINIA

(interrupting)

Thomas, you are the dearest boy. You would be a prize for any girl. It is sad that there are so few girls. But more and more, they keep coming. Every ship has new girls. And one of those girls is for you. She is on a ship, even now, out on the open sea. And as you imagine her, she is imagining you. As you yearn for her, she yearns for you. Promise me you will meet every arriving ship and watch for the girls as they disembark. Regard them with your heart and you will feel something, an instinct. A special girl. She will be carrying a load of things. Approach her, confidently. Ask her if you might have permission to ease her burden. She will smile. Tell her your name. She will hand you her things, but let her carry one small item. As you walk with her, tell her about Virginia. If you see someone familiar to you, introduce her. Help her feel content about her decision to come here.

The two sit in silence.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

And you may tell her that I will stand with her at your wedding.

THOMAS

You are so wise. I will always love you. Not in a way that would ever conflict with my own obligations. But in my heart.

Virginia smiles warmly. Thomas leaves. Virginia wipes a tear from her eye.

Another boy, HENRY, takes his place in the pew.

HENRY

May I sit with you?

VIRGINIA

Yes please. And what does dear Henry have to share this day?

HENRY
Thoughts, I think.

VIRGINIA
Thoughts. Tell me your thoughts.

HENRY
Well, I don't know if I truly
should, but at times, I have
thoughts of you.

VIRGINIA
How intriguing. Tell me more.

HENRY
Well, I been having these thoughts,
you see, mostly at night, before I
fall asleep.

VIRGINIA
Go on.

HENRY
Oh no, I can't, I shouldn't.
They're a bit improper.

VIRGINIA
Henry, you must! You sit with me
and offer me the gift of your
thoughts, and then you withhold my
gift. Tell me. I must now know.

HENRY
Alright then, so, I see you walking
beside the riverbank, in the
moonlight...

VIRGINIA
Yes, and what am I wearing?

HENRY
(embarrassed)
Well, you see, that's just it...

The rest of the girls, barge into the church and interrupt
Henry.

JULIANNE
It is time. We must go.

VIRGINIA

(to Henry)

Henry, you have a debt to me which you must pay anon, at the earliest and most advantageous moment.

EXT. SETTLEMENT - COMMONS AREA - DAY

The five girls are standing in a group at the end of a long table, around which a group of middle-aged church ladies with crosses around their necks sit, drinking tea. John Casor stands behind and away from the girls.

VIRGINIA

So, the idea that we have, concerning the lack of girls, and the great abundance of boys...you see, it's not fair for a boy to be denied the warmth and tenderness of a wife to comfort him after a day of labor. It's un-Christian. Jesus healed and comforted. So, we thought that if we could change the rules, for now, until we have more girls, so that a girl could have more than one husband. Two, or perhaps three.

JULIANNE

We were thinking up to five.

VIRGINIA

Yes, with five being the limit. And since you ladies are schooled in the Bible and religious matters, we wondered if there is any passage of scripture, which you are aware of, that we could use to support the idea.

The older women around the table are petrified, catatonic. They appear dead; zombie-like.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Well?

JULIANNE

Are they alright?

The girls wait a moment for some sign of life from the older women. Then they regard each other, shrug their shoulders, and walk off.

LATER:

The CHURCH LADIES have regained their composure.

CHURCH LADY #1
 These negroes, they have the devil
 in them, they surely do.

CHURCH LADY #2
 She would have our virgin girls
 corrupted, into common whores.

CHURCH LADY #1
 This Virginia, we must watch her.
 She's a witch, a disciple of the
 devil. I am certain of it.

The ladies nod in agreement.

EXT. SETTLEMENT DOCKSIDE - DAY

The girls are back near the dock area, with John Casor still holding the bouquet.

VIRGINIA
 (to friends)
 Now, you must come. You can stay as
 long as you please.

ELIZABETH
 We have hordes of room.

VIRGINIA
 My brothers each have their own
 house now, so we have the entire
 house to ourselves.

JULIANNE
 Full moon. It sounds so pagan.

ELIZABETH
 You will faint from delight.

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

The SCARBOROUGHs are a family of white planters. Their property is comparable to the Johnson's.

Outside, there is a modest gathering underway of local families, with food and drink. The racial mix of the group is roughly two whites to one black.

A boy in costume plays the recorder, while women gossip and children play.

Virginia and Elizabeth are together, off to the side.

ELIZABETH
Is William here?

VIRGINIA
Yes. But I haven't seen his father.

ELIZABETH
And his father is to make the
announcement.

Virginia nods. They share an anxious look.

INT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - PARLOR - DAY

The room is full of men, including the host, CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH. The men are standing and sitting with mugs of ale in hand and cigars and pipes billowing smoke.

FRANCIS PAYNE, a local black planter, addresses the group, with a book in his hand.

FRANCIS PAYNE
Gentlemen. I have received a book
from London with the most
astonishing information. It is a
discovery of the highest
significance.

ANTHONY
We pray you share this astonishing
information, and we must trust you
as to its contents, as half of us
here in this room cannot read a
single word of your London book.

Laughter rises and subsides.

FRANCIS PAYNE
A mathematician from Padua has
fashioned a spy glass with the most
powerful magnification, as to be
able to see the planets and the
heavens. He sees the planet Jupiter
with four moons of its own. And he
sees that Venus has phases, as the
moon has its phases.

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH
And what are his conclusions?

FRANCIS PAYNE
That the sun we see moving across
the sky each day, traveling from
east to west, is not moving at all.
It is we who move about it.

ANTHONY
This book of astonishing
information, is it a comedy or
perhaps a whim from a street bard?
How can any sane man deny the
movement of the sun, moon, and
stars, what he can see with his own
two eyes?

The group responds with a mixture of reactions. They are interrupted by MRS. SCARBOROUGH, who first signals her husband.

MRS. SCARBOROUGH
Everyone, I must interrupt you for
we are to have an announcement
outside.

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

Captain Scarborough addresses the gathering.

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH
It is with great pleasure and
happiness that we today announce
the engagement of our son, Phillip,
to Miss Elizabeth Johnson.

The crowd applauds and cheers. The men congratulate Phillip, while the women take turns hugging Elizabeth.

The young recorder player begins a new tune.

Off to the side, two local planters, LT. JOHN NEALE and MATTHEW PIPPIN, converse discreetly.

LT. JOHN NEALE
Now they'll be mingling with our
blood.

MATTHEW PIPPIN
It must stop. The question is, how?

LT. JOHN NEALE

If we keep allowing them wealth, it
will not stop.

MATTHEW PIPPIN

Posing like proper Englishmen.

LT. JOHN NEALE

They should all be pressed into
service.

INT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Anthony is meeting with Captain Scarborough.

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH

Anthony, this is the way it's done.
It's tradition. The dowry should be
half. Phillip brings a hundred
acres into the union and you
provide fifty.

ANTHONY

Tradition. Ha! English tradition.
You realize, of course, there are a
line of boys behind your son,
thirty-long.

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH

And how many of them is Elizabeth
in love with?

ANTHONY

That's got nothing to do with this.
It's about supply and demand, pure
and simple.

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

WILLIAM TUCKER, blond, handsome and nervous, approaches
Virginia, Elizabeth, and Mary, who are huddled up together.

WILLIAM TUCKER

(to Mary)

May I steal Virginia away mum?

Mary smiles warmly. William leads Virginia off.

In a private setting, away from the other guests, William
tries to explain.

VIRGINIA

Yes William, we all know he didn't come. Which begs the obvious question. Why?

WILLIAM TUCKER

Something's come up. It's a family situation, in a way.

VIRGINIA

Family situation. Your family.

WILLIAM TUCKER

Yes, you see the Tuckers are an old, traditional English family. Proud heritage. Very well connected actually. Generations of successful business ventures...

VIRGINIA

(interrupting)

William stop! Is the wedding off?

WILLIAM TUCKER

Yes.

Virginia tries to settle her emotions.

WILLIAM TUCKER (CONT'D)

You see, if we were to marry, and have children, they wouldn't look like normal, English children. Right? And..

VIRGINIA

You mean they'd be dark, with curly hair, sort of like me.

WILLIAM TUCKER

Yes, exactly.

VIRGINIA

And your family? I missed that part.

WILLIAM TUCKER

Well, father believes that our family, over in England, they may not understand why I wouldn't prefer to marry a normal English girl.

VIRGINIA

A white girl.

William nods.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I'm confused, because you led me to believe you liked, no sorry - loved my dark skin and my long curls.

WILLIAM TUCKER

Virginia, I adore you.

VIRGINIA

Adore. Well if you adore me, you must really love this family of yours over in England. People you've never even met, and probably never will. You're breaking us off over your fear about how these people might feel about having some dark-skinned cousins over in America?

WILLIAM TUCKER

Virginia, I'm so sorry.

VIRGINIA

Wait, wait, okay, this has nothing to do with family in England. This is about your father.

She's right, and his expression confirms it.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry.

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

The Johnson family is headed back home, with Anthony and Mary riding a simple, two-seater, one-horse buggy. John Casor follows behind on horseback. Virginia and Elizabeth lead the way on horseback, riding women's saddles.

ELIZABETH

Do you want to talk about it? We could see you were upset. That can only mean one thing, I think. Virginia?

Virginia lifts her dress, swings her leg over the saddle, kicks the horse into a gallop and takes off. Elizabeth tries to follow, but quickly gives up.

INT. JOHNSON STABLE - DAY

Virginia is nestled into a pile of soft hay. Mary appears, followed by Elizabeth. Elizabeth lets out a playful scream, jumps, and lands in the hay. Mary falls into the hay between them. Virginia's mood lightens.

MARY JOHNSON
 (to Virginia)
 We know what happened, but we don't
 know why.

Virginia lifts her arm and points to her forearm.

VIRGINIA
 This.

She grabs her hair.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
 And this.

MARY JOHNSON
 Oh, I see.

ELIZABETH
 I thought you two were in love.

MARY JOHNSON
 Love is only part of what makes a
 marriage work. You need more than
 love.

ELIZABETH
 Were you and Daddy in love?

Mary laughs heartily.

MARY JOHNSON
 Love had nothing to do with it. At
 least at first. Love came later.
 Your father was isolated when he
 first arrived. Only a few Africans.
 No single women. Who was a young
 slave to marry? A white woman?
 When he first laid eyes on me, that
 was it. Wouldn't leave me alone.
 He proposed marriage the second day
 I was here.

ELIZABETH
 When Daddy wants something, he goes
 after it.

MARY JOHNSON

Yes, he does.

(to Virginia)

You lost William, but he is only one of dozens of eligible young men. Your dreams of becoming the wife of a great Virginia planter are still very much alive.

VIRGINIA

Are they? They don't feel alive. They feel dead. How can I join a family, knowing there may be members of that family who don't accept me, that feel embarrassed or ashamed because of how I look?

MARY JOHNSON

Give it some time. Time heals everything.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - DAY

John Casor is walking hurriedly toward the manor house. He arrives to find Virginia seated on the front porch.

VIRGINIA

John Casor, follow me.

She rises, turns to enter the house and he follows.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Virginia stands in the doorway and invites him in.

VIRGINIA

Come in.

She closes the door behind him. Virginia's bedchamber is a womb of femininity. It is filled with lace, soft pillows, and finery. She directs him to sit in a loveseat.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Sit here.

She picks up a pillow in a crimson sham and places it on his lap. Then she places his hands on the pillow.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I have many nice things. Pillows are so comforting. They're soft. Isn't it soft?

John Casor is too intimidated to respond.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

This is my bedchamber. This is my private place, my safe place. In here, I can do as I please. Anything. Like wearing clothing. I love beautiful garments, but dresses and corsets can be so bothersome, so restrictive. You don't know what a corset is, do you?

He appears confused.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

In here, John Casor, I can take off all of my clothes and no one can tell me not to. How are things going so far with Daddy?

JOHN CASOR

He is a good man. His servants speak well of him.

VIRGINIA

Yes, a good man. But he is Daddy. You see, there is something you must know. Do you understand the word 'war', what it means, war?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

Good. Daddy and I are at war. And you're part of that war. Daddy and I are at war over you. Daddy wants you to break your back in the fields. But I need you to help me fulfill my social obligations. To take me places. To the neighbors, to the settlements. Up to now, Mummy has taken me, but she has grown weary from the increasing demands on my time. Therefore, I need you to accompany me, so that I am escorted, that I might feel safe.

Virginia Johnson dramatic pause.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

You see, there are two worlds, my world and Daddy's world. Daddy wants you to live in his world. But his world is...do you know the words, heaven and hell?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

Good. My world is heaven. Daddy's world is hell. You will live in heaven. Now, like any war, there are certain roles that people must play. Like spies. You will spy for me. You will learn what Daddy is saying about me, and especially what he is saying about my friends, that is, boys. Do you understand?

He nods an uncertain nod.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Good. Now, what will happen is that Daddy will ask you to be his spy. And you will agree to act as his spy, because when you are spying for Daddy, you will in fact be spying for me. When he asks about me, what I'm doing, where I go, and especially when he asks about boys, you will tell him certain things. I will prepare you with what to say. Do you understand?

He does not. She continues, without waiting for his reply.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Good. Now, because it is a war, you must choose sides. You must declare your loyalty. You cannot be loyal to both sides in a war. You will be loyal to me. If I detect even the slightest lapse in your loyalty to me, you will be punished!

She slaps him across the face, without enough force to cause pain, but sufficient to gain his attention.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Loyalty is essential, because you will be given duties of a highly personal nature.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

So personal that Daddy may never, ever know. For example, Daddy can never know that you have entered my bedchamber. It is forbidden. If I were to tell Daddy that you were in here, he would fly into a rage. There is no telling. He might grab a sword or his musket. So, you must guard your loyalty to me as if your life depended on it. Fortunately, Daddy is out for the day. If he were here right now, you could be in grave danger. Now, hand me the pillow.

He hands over the pillow.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

In a few days' time, you will escort me to my land. I have my own land. Now, you may return to the fields.

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

He moves toward the door and opens it. Virginia stops him.

VIRGINIA

(warmly)

John Casor, I would never tell Daddy you were in my bedchamber. His head would likely explode and I would be killed. Now go.

Virginia closes the door, picks up the crimson pillow, and clutches it against her body. She goes to the window and peers out for a moment. Then she hops onto her bed and lies on her side, still clutching the pillow.

EXT. TOBACCO FIELD - DAY

Anthony is out near his fields with his wholesale merchant, CAPT. SAMUEL GOULDSMITH, inspecting tobacco samples.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH

Excellent quality, as always. Same price as before?

Anthony nods.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH (CONT'D)
 We sail in ten days. How many bales
 will be ready?

Mary hurries up toward the men.

MARY JOHNSON
 (to Anthony)
 Visitors. Lord Clifford, Sir
 Archer.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - SIDE LAWN - DAY

Two young noblemen have arrived, accompanied by four armed
 guards who attend the horses.

Capt. Gouldsmith, SIR ARCHER and LORD CLIFFORD are seated
 under a shade tree with Anthony. The nobles crank up their
 cigars. Mary stands behind Anthony.

MARY JOHNSON
 I'll get some tea and snacks.

SIR ARCHER
 (to Mary)
 Thank you, mum.

She leaves for the house.

ANTHONY
 We didn't think the crown cared
 about any of these matters. Why is
 it that my wife and my girls are
 taxed, like common laborers? Makes
 no sense to us, nor to our
 neighbors.

LORD CLIFFORD
 That's why we're here. To learn
 from the Northampton planters about
 these and other issues.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR ENTRANCE - DAY

Mary emerges out of the doorway with tray in hand, laden with
 tea and snacks. Virginia, in her best dress, snatches the
 tray away from her mother and heads for the men.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - SIDE LAWN - DAY

Virginia, in her coquette persona, serves the men.

SIR ARCHER

Many of these decisions are made in England, where people are not familiar with the colonies, and the unique culture which has developed in some parts of the New World.

LORD CLIFFORD

You see, to an Englishman, negro means servant. But negro means many things in Virginia.

SIR ARCHER

Your name is known in London. Your product has a reputation, preferred by the aristocracy.

After serving, Virginia continues to stand nearby holding a tea towel, eavesdropping.

LORD CLIFFORD

Sir Archer will be returning to London soon, for a year, and will raise these matters, and garner support, for changes.

ANTHONY

(to Virginia)

Where's your mother?

Virginia looks toward her mother, who is standing a few paces behind Anthony. Anthony turns, then turns back to Virginia.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

(to Virginia)

Well, are you just going to stand there?

VIRGINIA

Yes.

ANTHONY

No.

Virginia ignores her father and regards the fancy ruff around Sir Archer's neck.

VIRGINIA

(to Sir Archer)

I like your ruff.

SIR ARCHER

Thank you.

VIRGINIA
The gold threading. Very intricate.

SIR ARCHER
Yes, my grandmother made this for me, actually.

VIRGINIA
I give ruffs to Daddy but he won't wear them. He says they get in his way when he works.

Anthony, flustered, turns to Mary.

ANTHONY
Take her inside.

VIRGINIA
I want to stay and listen. I might have an opinion.

ANTHONY
Opinion?!
(to Mary)
Take her in.

MARY JOHNSON
(to Virginia)
Come on. Let's leave the men alone.

VIRGINIA
(disgusted)
Hmph!

She throws the tea towel to the ground and walks off in a huff. Lord Clifford and Sir Anthony break out in laughter over the spectacle.

SIR ARCHER
I'm a bit inclined to want to hear what she has to say.

LORD CLIFFORD
Hear, hear.

More laughter.

ANTHONY
Gentlemen, I might be presumptuous in saying this, but I will anyway. When a planter's son comes calling, hoping to match wits with Virginia, I pay it little heed. Most have been out here already.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

But if a man of noble birth comes hither, now that's a different matter. You gentlemen are always welcome in my home. But if a visit is for the purpose of enjoying the company of my elder daughter, that would first require a conversation between you and your fathers.

SIR ARCHER

Sir, you are in no way presumptuous.

LORD CLIFFORD

The notion of matching wits with Virginia proposes a most delightful challenge, indeed.

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

Virginia, wearing a romantic dress, and John Casor are atop horses, riding side-by-side.

VIRGINIA

When you were in Dongo, before your capture, was it hot where you were?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, always hot.

VIRGINIA

How did you dress? What did you wear?

JOHN CASOR

We wore nothing.

She lets that sink in.

VIRGINIA

Daddy said that you were the oldest. Did you have a woman, a wife?

JOHN CASOR

There were no women. Girls are easy to catch.

VIRGINIA

So, there were no women at all?

JOHN CASOR

No. There were no women.

VIRGINIA

Did you go out looking for a woman?

JOHN CASOR

Yes. Many times. I could not find any women.

VIRGINIA

That means, I'm one of the only women you've known.

She lets that sink in.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I own a large piece of land. A thousand acres. My father was able to have it included in the patent for my brothers' farms. No one wanted it. My land is half swamp and half beach and dunes. It cannot be farmed and nothing can be built on it. The swamp is my barricade, my moat. It is impossible to cross on foot or on horse. Except, for one entryway which is secret. It is known only by my sister.

Virginia suddenly becomes stern and steely.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

No one may ever know how to enter. No one! If you should divulge my entryway to anyone, I will have you whipped by men!

They make extended eye contact. She can see he understands. She softens her tone.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

When we arrive at my land, we will remove our clothing. We will not wear clothing on my land when the weather is fair. We will first go to my lake. I will have you bathe me. You will gain knowledge of my body. Then, we will walk through the dunes to my beach.

Virginia and John Casor are walking through the dunes. She stops, walks around him and looks him over.

Virginia cautiously runs her fingertips across his chest and upper arms. Then she drapes her hands around his neck.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
Carry me to the water.

He picks her up into his arms and carries her toward the water.

At the water's edge, he continues to hold onto her.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
Set me down.

He continues to hold her in his arms. Virginia gives him a curious look.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
Set me down.

He continues to hold her in his arms.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
John Casor, how dare you defy my order? You have misbehaved again. Now, you will be punished.

JOHN CASOR
I don't mind. It doesn't hurt.

VIRGINIA
Why won't you set me down?

JOHN CASOR
I like holding you. I like feeling your body next to mine.

VIRGINIA
You do. Maybe I won't have to whip you after all. You must not forget though, you are a slave and slaves must always obey their masters.

JOHN CASOR
When I first arrived here, I hated being a slave, especially a woman's slave. But when we went to Jamestown on Landing Day, I watched you and I decided you were a great person. By the time we left, I changed my mind. Now I feel lucky to be the slave of a great person.

Virginia snuggles her head against his chest and neck.

VIRGINIA

I like being held by you. If you weren't a slave, I might even allow you to court me. I want you to hold me like this until the sun sets.

He sets her down gently. She pretends to be aghast. Then she gives him a gentle love slap across his face.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Naughty.

She carefully sizes him up. Then she takes his forearm and moves his hand toward his penis.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Touch your body.

He complies. She gazes for a moment. Her eyes widen.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

When you were in Dongo, did you touch your body in this manner?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

In the future, you may only do it in my presence.

Virginia walks out into the surf, then turns and walks backwards.

When she reaches waist-deep water, she arches her back to allow the waves to slap against her backside.

Then she rides a wave in toward him that deposits her near his feet. She stands.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

When we are here, on my land, together, I want you to cause your body to be as it is now; enlarged, extended, long, and solid. I want you to maintain it in this condition so that I may, at all times, have the pleasure of gazing at your manhood, in the fullness of its glory.

Virginia is naked atop her horse, riding a man's saddle, galloping along at the water's edge with her body pressed tightly against the saddle.

INT. ANTHONY'S STUDY - DAY

Anthony is inspecting a large map on his desk, when Virginia barges in.

VIRGINIA
Daddy, I want to be called lady.

ANTHONY
You want what?

VIRGINIA
To be called lady. Like the nobles.

ANTHONY
You want to be called Lady Virginia or Lady Johnson? Is that what you mean?

VIRGINIA
Yes, exactly.

ANTHONY
You mean around here, around the manor?

VIRGINIA
No, everywhere.

ANTHONY
And just how do you propose to cause this to happen? I suppose you want me to go around instructing everyone to begin calling you lady.

VIRGINIA
Well, yes, that would help, if you were willing.

Anthony places his hands on his desk, slumps over, and shakes his head.

ANTHONY
Virginia, Virginia. It's a wonder we've been able to disguise this madness of yours. I half fear they'll show up one day and carry you off.

VIRGINIA
So, does that mean you won't help.

ANTHONY
 (exasperated)
 Yes.

EXT. JOHNSON LAWN - NIGHT

John Casor is standing atop a work cart with a lantern in one hand and a book in the other. He is reading to Virginia, who is hanging out of her bedchamber window, wearing only underwear.

He struggles with many of the words, but manages to plod through the lines.

JOHN CASOR
 As daylight doth a lamp, her eyes
 in heaven would, through the airy
 region stream so bright...

Anthony suddenly appears on the lawn wearing a nightshirt and a gentleman's hat, with a short musket in his hand.

ANTHONY
 Now what's all this!

VIRGINIA
 He's reading to me. It's a play.

ANTHONY
 It's a what? Why this late? It's
 the middle of the night. I bought
 John to weed my fields, not read to
 you. And put something on.

She wraps a light robe around her shoulders.

VIRGINIA
 We had to wait. The trees were
 blocking the moonlight. He cannot
 weed fields at night.

ANTHONY
 You know, Virginia, your behavior
 at times alarms me. You live in a
 sort of made-up world. You are
 somehow incapable of comprehending
 the fact that there are two worlds.
 The rest of us live in the real
 world. And the worst of it is, you
 have no idea what I'm talking
 about. That dressing room of yours
 is a perfect example.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You possess more dresses than there are days in the year. You've got fifty acres in that dressing room.

VIRGINIA

But Daddy, it's just a small space.

ANTHONY

Not small enough!

Anthony huffs off.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anthony and Mary are in bed sharing pillow talk.

ANTHONY

I truly fear this insanity of hers will one day consume her.

MARY JOHNSON

Antonio, it is an innocent madness.

ANTHONY

Not so innocent the night she threatened to kill George Percie.

MARY JOHNSON

You auctioned her off, like a cow. To a man almost thirty years her senior. And she would not have killed him.

ANTHONY

She would have. I knew from her eyes. I pray I never witness the fury of those eyes again.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

Virginia is tutoring John Casor at the table.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - DAY

Mary is discreetly observing and listening to the couple from an open window.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

They continue the lesson.

JOHN CASOR
How do you spell love?

Virginia writes it out.

VIRGINIA
Love. L. O. V. E.

JOHN CASOR
Why is the 'E' there? It's not part
of the sound.

VIRGINIA
Well, it just is. English can be a
bit tricky.

JOHN CASOR
You love me.

VIRGINIA
(stunned)
What did you just say?

JOHN CASOR
You love me. That's why you're
teaching me, because you love me.

VIRGINIA
(aghast)
Now you will be whipped! Ladies do
not love their servants. They
command them. They discipline them
when necessary.

JOHN CASOR
Am I a servant or am I a slave?

VIRGINIA
That's a question for Daddy. I
don't know, you're both. How can
you possibly suggest that I love
you? And what could you know about
love?

JOHN CASOR
You love me when you discipline me.
You never strike me hard enough to
hurt. You just do it to control.

VIRGINIA
It's going to hurt from now on.

JOHN CASOR
You can't hurt me.

VIRGINIA
 (annoyed)
 What? Stand up!

They both stand and Virginia walks around the table. She makes a fist and strikes him in the abdomen. He barely flinches. She strikes him twice more. He cracks a subtle smile.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
 I might just strike you for the rest of the day. Purely for my own personal pleasure.

She begins moving around him, punching him in various places; first his chest, then his upper arm, then his back. With each blow, her mood lightens up.

Then she hauls off and hits him in the butt. She checks his reaction, then hits him in the butt again as hard as she can. She sprains her wrist, then recoils with pain, holding her wrist.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
 Ow! Owww.

He grins.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
 (annoyed)
 Stop.

JOHN CASOR
 I know what you need.

VIRGINIA
 What?

JOHN CASOR
 You need a heart beating next to yours.

He pulls her chest against his chest, so that their two hearts are physically against each other.

He moves away from her. Virginia seems stunned as she processes the experience. She remembers her sore wrist.

One of Anthony's WHITE SERVANTS hustles toward the rear of the house and WHISTLES. He waves toward John Casor.

WHITE SERVANT
 John! Come on!

He jogs off with the white servant.

VIRGINIA

Wait! Where are you going?

She sits back at the table and nurses her wrist. Mary appears and sits across from her.

MARY JOHNSON

We live in a man's world. Women are told what they should think and do, how to feel. We should have the freedom to decide things for ourselves.

Virginia basks in her mother's counsel.

MARY JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I will share my advice, but I won't interfere with your freedom. I trust you.

She picks up the scrap of paper upon which Virginia wrote the word 'love'.

MARY JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Whether he's right or not...that's for you to decide.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - DAY

Virginia, in a modest dress with conservative neckline, is in her bedchamber, primping in front of her mirror. Julianne's voice calls out.

JULIANNE (O.C.)

Virginia. Virginia!

Virginia hurries down the hallway to a guest room.

Inside, her three girlfriends are fussing with the bodices provided by Virginia. The bodices are cut so low, they cover none of the breast. Instead, they serve only to lift. The girls each wear ankle-length, lightweight frilly skirts.

JULIANNE (CONT'D)

Is there more to these?

KATHERINE

They cover nothing.

AMY

You cannot imagine we will wear these.

VIRGINIA

They are from London. It's the new style. Bosoms are in fashion.

JULIANNE

Surely not.

VIRGINIA

Yes, ladies of court and the gentle ladies. They're wild in London over bosoms.

Julianne, Katherine and Amy compete for space in front of the mirror to catch a glimpse of themselves.

KATHERINE

But we cannot wear them here.

VIRGINIA

Not here. We are headed deep into the primeval forest. John Casor is going to climb trees.

JULIANNE

Climb trees?

VIRGINIA

Yes, he's exceptionally skilled, actually. A true spectacle to witness. He's very masculine.

KATHERINE

He is a rather large man.

VIRGINIA

Yes, quite large in fact.

Katherine and Julianne wonder if that's a double entendre. Julianne straightens her bodice and yanks it up.

JULIANNE

Why do we need to be in these, if all we're doing is hiking through the woods?

VIRGINIA

We have a mission today, a special purpose.

AMY

Mission?

VIRGINIA

Yes, we're going to experiment, you might say.

Virginia drapes lightweight shawls around the shoulders of her three friends.

KATHERINE

Experiment? What sort of experiment?

VIRGINIA

A test of our feminine prowess.

Virginia's friends regard each other curiously.

EXT. VIRGINIA FOREST - DAY

The four young women meander casually through the beautiful forested landscape, clearly in no hurry.

JULIANNE

Where are we going?

VIRGINIA

Not far. A lovely meadow surrounded by tall trees that John Casor discovered.

KATHERINE

Tell us about your experiment.

VIRGINIA

Yes. You see girls, we will soon be married, the four of us, and there is much to learn about men. One of the duties of a wife is to bear offspring, and that begins, of course, with love-making.

JULIANNE

Virginia! Surely, you're not suggesting that...

VIRGINIA

No no no. Not that. You see, a woman can prepare, can engage in love-making quite easily, whenever the time and the situation are right. But a man, her husband must be in the right condition.

KATHERINE

You mean...
(to Julianne)
Does she mean?

JULIANNE

I do believe so.

VIRGINIA

Yes. And it is up to the wife to provide the proper stimulus, so that he can find himself in his love-making condition. She must encourage his arousal. A wife must use her feminine allure, one could say, to help his body to become ready.

AMY

I don't think I follow exactly. His body has to become ready?

KATHERINE

Surely Amy, you must have some experience with boys by now. You live right in the settlement. There must be a hundred boys.

AMY

Actually, my mother scares them off. She can be terribly rude.

VIRGINIA

So this is the perfect opportunity.

JULIANNE

And I'm assuming John Casor is to play some part in this...experimentation?

VIRGINIA

Yes, John Casor is the perfect subject. We can't very well test our feminine wiles in this way with any of the settlement boys. John Casor is the ideal test subject.

KATHERINE

Do you think he'll mind? Does it hurt when...it swells up like that?

JULIANNE

(giggles)

No of course not. They like it.

KATHERINE

Julianne, is there something you've been keeping from us?

JULIANNE

(nervously)

No, it's just, my mother has explained all of this...in some detail, I might add.

All four girls giggle.

EXT. VIRGINIA MEADOW - DAY

They reach near the edge of the little meadow, but are still a few paces back in the trees. John Casor is in the meadow naked, lounging atop a boulder. The women spot him. Katherine grabs Virginia's arm to stop her.

KATHERINE

He's naked. You didn't say...

VIRGINIA

Yes, of course. They don't wear clothes in Africa. Africa is very hot.

The women pause to regard John Casor. Her friends are agape.

AMY

(awestruck)

We're actually going to see it?

JULIANNE

He appears quite beautiful.

Virginia removes the light shawls from the girls' shoulders and ties them around their waists.

VIRGINIA

Now, just follow my lead. Experiment. Do and say what comes naturally.

John Casor watches the women approach him from across the meadow. He stands, smiles and faces them. Virginia's friends visually inspect their test subject.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Have you found a tree, a good one?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, over there. It is tall and straight. Just the right thickness. It has to be thick enough so that you can get a good grip on it but not so thick that you can't get your hands around it.

Julianne glances at Virginia, wide-eyed.

VIRGINIA

Well, I know climbing is very strenuous, so we thought we should massage your muscles first, to get you prepared. We'll each take a section. I'll massage your back...Julianne, you can massage his chest, and Katherine and Amy, each of you take an arm.

Amy and Katherine each begin to massage an arm, while Julianne faces John Casor and begins stroking his chest.

JULIANNE

You must be very strong. Your chest is hard, like a rock.

Katherine positions John Casor's wrist and forearm against her breasts.

KATHERINE

Keep your arm here, like this, so I can get my hands around your muscles.

Amy sees what Katherine has done and presses his other wrist and forearm against her breasts.

Virginia stands behind him and begins stroking and scratching his back lightly with her nails.

JULIANNE

These bodices are so hot out here in the sun. Would you mind unhooking me?

She turns around so her back is facing him and pulls her hair to the side.

JULIANNE (CONT'D)
You just undo the hooks. Can you see them?

Virginia helps him find the hooks.

VIRGINIA
Here.

He undoes the hooks and her bodice falls to the ground. She turns back and faces him.

JULIANNE
That's so much better. Let me rub your shoulders.

Julianne reaches up and presses her breasts against his torso as she massages.

KATHERINE
His arms are huge.
(to John Casor)
I think your arms are bigger than my thighs.

Virginia begins stroking and scratching his buttocks.

AMY
I feel tingly, my body is all tingly, I'm feeling dizzy.

VIRGINIA
(to John Casor)
Do you like being touched by all of us?

JOHN CASOR
It feels good.

Julianne gazes down, then maneuvers a bit to the side.

JULIANNE
You need more room for that. Will you be able to climb like that, with it, sticking out like that?

Amy and Katherine look down to regard John Casor's condition. The women share smiles of satisfaction and triumph.

JOHN CASOR
I can climb like this.

Julianne reaches down and takes hold of his penis.

JULIANNE
 You're very firm.
 (to Katherine)
 Experience his firmness.

Katherine reaches over and takes hold of his penis.

KATHERINE
 It is firm.

Virginia speaks softly into his ear.

VIRGINIA
 Let's go find your tree. We want to
 watch you climb.

John Casor turns in the direction of his tree and begins walking. The four young women crowd near him with their hands still on his body as he walks.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Virginia and her three friends are preparing to leave.

VIRGINIA
 Now, do we have everything? The
 bibles.

Amy lifts up a satchel.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
 What about the bodices?

KATHERINE
 We dare not bare our bosoms in the
 presence of complete strangers.

VIRGINIA
 One should always be prepared for
 unexpected opportunities.

JULIANNE
 (to Amy)
 Get the bodices.

EXT. VIRGINIA WOODS - DAY

A raucous party is underway in a clearing, attended by teenagers and young adults.

The racial mix is about evenly split. It is midday, but a bonfire crackles. A large barrel of ale is propped up on a log, with mugs in many hands.

An ensemble of ten male musicians jams and entertains. Five white musicians play traditional renaissance instruments; a viol, an archaic guitar, a flute, a lute, and a second wind instrument.

Five black drummers beat out a rhythm on various-sized, tuned, hollowed-out logs. The music is a fusion of renaissance dance and march, with African rhythms.

Black and white girls dance in a group. The white girls appear to be trying to mimic the black girls' movements.

EXT. RIVER TRIBUTARY - RIVERBANK - DAY

John Casor, Virginia and the girls have just landed in their boat, late in the afternoon. Several boats are docked along the bank. The rhythms are heard nearby.

John Casor steadies the boat as the girls disembark. A six-foot tall cross has been planted in the ground near the riverbank. Some friends arrive to greet them.

VIRGINIA

(to friends)

The cross, perfect. Amy has the Bibles.

(to Julianne)

Now, if any...church people do arrive, we offer them bibles. We are here on a mission to save the heathen in the name of Christianity.

EXT. VIRGINIA WOODS - NIGHT

Under the full moon, John Casor has taken over drumming duties on the largest of the log-drums. The rhythms have heated up.

A series of shots captures the festivities. Blacks and whites intermingle fluidly. Amy has donned a bodice and dances alongside a topless black girl.

A few revelers appear tipsy from the ale. One of them breaks into an Irish-style dance, and people surround him and clap.

One of the black drummers hands over his sticks to a white boy and he gets into the rhythm.

John Casor hands an extra set of sticks to Virginia. She stands next to him, picks up the rhythm, and gives it a go.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - DAY

The men have set up a musket firing range, with a row of watermelons. They load and fire at will. Anthony is training John Casor. He fires and hits his melon.

ANTHONY

That's it! You have it now!

John Casor slowly reloads.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You see all the men here, on this land, and the farms around us? Planters, servants, slaves...all of us are soldiers, fighters. One day, Pamunkeys will come running at us through these trees. You'll be fighting for your life. This farm is ready. Muskets remain loaded with powder, always.

JOHN CASOR

Why do they want to harm us?

ANTHONY

They want our land. Treaties mean nothing to them. Their chief, Opechancanough, he wants us to leave or he wants us all dead. But we're not leaving. We're never leaving. Walk with me.

John Casor hands his musket to another man. They walk together slowly.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

About Virginia, all the time she spends dashing about. It would unburden my mind if I knew more about where she goes, who she sees. If you could keep me informed, it would be a great comfort to me.

He pats John Casor on the back and walks off.

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are on horseback, on their way to her land. She is wearing a romantic dress. He is wearing a casual gentleman's outfit.

VIRGINIA

Today I will teach you to kiss. You will kiss my mouth and my body. If you discover a particular feature of my body that you especially admire, you may linger there, as you please.

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are riding atop a horse, naked, with John Casor in the saddle, and Virginia sitting cross-saddle against his lap. He pulls the horse up.

VIRGINIA

Mingle your hand with mine.

They comingle their hands in his lap.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

When you were back in Dongo, searching for a woman, you were searching for me. I was the woman you longed for. You felt me. But you could not find me. I was across the sea. But now I am here, right next to you. And I will always be here.

John Casor has been working hard on these lines. He comes across like the bard himself, accent and all. At the conclusion, he touches her cheek with his fingertips.

JOHN CASOR

As daylight doth a lamp,
her eyes in heaven would,
through the airy region
stream so bright,
that birds would sing,
and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek
upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon

(MORE)

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)

that hand,
that I might touch that cheek.

She plants a fervent kiss on his lips and he responds. They break their kiss reluctantly.

VIRGINIA

My body longs for you. But it is forbidden to lie with a servant. After seven years, we will make love, here, on this horse. I will beseech Daddy for your freedom.

JOHN CASOR

If I were to place myself inside of you, I know you would not stop me. But I will not. I respect you. We will do what you think is right.

EXT. JAMES RIVER - DAY

A group of mostly black Christians has gathered for John Casor's baptism. A small chorus of singers off to the side, sings a renaissance chorale.

Two men walk him into the river, turn him, hold his back and lower him into the water.

Virginia is crying against Elizabeth's shoulder.

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

A modest group of family, close friends, and eligible bachelors is gathered on the Scarborough lawn to witness the marriage between Elizabeth and Phillip Scarborough.

MINISTER

By the power entrusted in me by the Church of England, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, I now pronounce you, man and wife.

Hugs and congratulations break out throughout the group. A musical ensemble strikes up a renaissance dance piece.

Anthony and Mary have moved to the side to speak privately.

MARY JOHNSON

Are you really willing to risk her future, her happiness?

ANTHONY

I'm not risking any such thing.
I've told him my decision.

MARY JOHNSON

Give them the fifty acres.

ANTHONY

No.

Virginia and Elizabeth speak privately, looking away from the event's activities.

ELIZABETH

Many of Virginia's fine gentlemen
are present. All eyes are upon you.

VIRGINIA

I hear not the call of matrimony.

ELIZABETH

You spoil your chances with a
fascination over a servant.

VIRGINIA

I prize his company.

ELIZABETH

He is not even a servant. He is
your pet. You have a pet human.

VIRGINIA

He is a man. John Casor is a true
man.

ELIZABETH

Very well then. Man-puppy.

VIRGINIA

He is a gentleman, honorable. A
man raised in the wilds of Africa,
he is more a gentleman than these
English boys.

Anthony, Mary, MR. AND MRS. LEE and their nephew, CAPTAIN
ARCHIBALD LEE appear behind Virginia and Elizabeth.

ANTHONY

Virginia.

She and Elizabeth turn. Captain Lee is a dashing young man,
apparently a real gentleman.

MARY

Virginia, this is Captain Lee, the Lee's nephew. He's arrived recently from Southampton. He'll be settling here, in Yorktown.

Captain Lee clicks his heels together and offers a deferential head nod.

ARCHIE

Archibald, Archie. My distinct pleasure Miss Virginia.

Virginia is suddenly entranced.

VIRGINIA

The pleasure is most certainly mine, Captain Lee, Archie.

ANTHONY

We've invited the Lees to visit the manor. Next week.

Archie offers Virginia a smile and she responds in kind. She glances at Elizabeth, then back to Archie.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Anthony is meeting with his BARRISTER, who has some documents laid out. Mary observes from nearby.

BARRISTER

I had them produce facsimiles. This is the complaint, and this is the original hand-written agreement.

ANTHONY

Hand-written?

Anthony grabs the document.

MARY JOHNSON

Anthony is illiterate. He does not read, nor write.

ANTHONY

Not my marke. It's a forgery. It says I agreed to give him a hundred acres?

BARRISTER

Captain Scarborough seeks relief
for payment of an unspecified debt.
Do you wish to contest?

MARY JOHNSON

We'll inform you.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anthony and Mary are in bed. She is sitting up and he is lying down, propped up by pillows.

MARY JOHNSON

If you had agreed to the dowry, it would have only been fifty. We can't make a big scene out of this in a courtroom. Everyone in Northampton will hear of it.

Anthony turns onto his side, violently.

ANTHONY

Oh, fie! Blast it!

EXT. JOHNSON STABLES - DAY

John Casor has three horses saddled and prepared outside the stable, including one with a woman's saddle. Virginia and Archie approach.

VIRGINIA

(to John Casor)

We'll just need the two. I think Mummy may need some help inside.

John Casor does his best to disguise his jealousy as Virginia and Archie ride off.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Virginia and Archie walk casually beside a river, holding the reins of their horses who walk along behind.

ARCHIE

I'm just now setting everything up.
The house is nearly finished.
Simple, but spacious.

VIRGINIA

You don't waste any time. And you'll be sailing back and forth?

ARCHIE

Well, perhaps. I've arranged for sea captains, which should allow me to remain in Virginia.

VIRGINIA

I see, so your move here is permanent?

ARCHIE

Yes. Virginia has a wealth of goods and resources that are needed in England and throughout the continent, actually.

They walk together quietly.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I'll be needing help, of course, I mean around the house.

VIRGINIA

Help.

ARCHIE

Yes, I'll need a negro, or perhaps two.

VIRGINIA

A negro. I see. And what will you have your negros doing?

Archie stops and faces Virginia. He toys with her hair.

ARCHIE

Well, that depends on the negro of course. A man needs many things.

She baits him.

VIRGINIA

Naturally. And what is it that you need, Captain Lee?

He chuckles mischievously.

ARCHIE

You know, actually, this is a bit awkward, I need to answer the call of nature. Would you excuse me for a moment?

VIRGINIA

When nature calls...

Archie disappears behind some shrubs. Virginia gazes out at the river's flowing waters.

Archie stands behind Virginia with his pants in his hand. He drops them to the ground.

ARCHIE

Virginia.

She turns and is shocked by his nakedness. He grabs her by the hair.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Let's see how you do.

Virginia grabs his wrists and forcibly removes his hands from her hair. Then she slaps him hard and pushes him hard. He loses his balance.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Ow! Damn you!

She grabs his pants, runs to her horse and mounts, and quickly kicks the horse into a gallop.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Come back with my pants, you wretched bitch! Stop! Stop I say!

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

Virginia slows her horse long enough to deposit his pants behind a fallen tree, then kicks her horse back into a gallop.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Anthony, Mary, and the Lees are seated comfortably with John Casor standing nearby. Virginia trots up and dismounts. John Casor takes the reins of the horse.

ANTHONY

Where is Captain Lee?

VIRGINIA
He's been delayed. I'm afraid he's
lost his pants.

Anthony and Mary regard the Lees with a scowl.

Virginia walks off, followed by John Casor leading the horse.

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

Archie is riding along slowly with no pants and a scowl on his face.

INT. JOHNSON STABLE - DAY

Virginia falls backward into a pile of soft hay with John Casor watching her curiously. She stands, grabs him by the shirt, and falls backward, pulling him down next to her.

She extends her arms in a receptive pose.

VIRGINIA
Kiss me.

She closes her eyes. He kisses her warmly.

SUPERNATURAL VISION

Virginia's face is consumed by pulsating stars, which emit drum beats. The drum beats call out an exotic rhythm. Her face throbs back and forth between pulsating, exploding stars.

END OF VISION

John Casor gently pulls his lips away. Virginia slowly opens her eyes.

VIRGINIA
What just happened? Who are you?

EXT. BEACH - DUNES - NIGHT

Virginia and John Casor are camping out under the stars, with a campfire blazing and crackling.

JOHN CASOR
The stars here look the same as in
Africa.

VIRGINIA

What was it like in Dongo?

JOHN CASOR

Peaceful. The people of Dongo are like a family. They help each other.

VIRGINIA

Except the soldiers.

JOHN CASOR

The soldiers are not from Dongo. They come from the North. They use Dongo to collect captives. Our people don't fight them. They just hide and wait for them to leave.

VIRGINIA

Why not fight them, to keep from being captured?

JOHN CASOR

The old man said not to fight. If we learn to fight, then we'll be fighting each other.

VIRGINIA

Who is the old man?

JOHN CASOR

There is an old man, very old, gray hair, he lives in a cave. He is the only old man in Dongo. He knows many things. Very wise.

VIRGINIA

The soldiers never caught him?

JOHN CASOR

No. When your hair turns gray, the soldiers leave you alone.

VIRGINIA

Wouldn't it be better to fight the soldiers? Maybe if you fought back, they would stop taking people.

JOHN CASOR

The old man said not to harm the soldiers. He said we should love them the way we love each other.

VIRGINIA

So, everybody hides...and climbs trees. If the Pamunkey attack again the colony will fight back. You'll have to fight. The English don't run and hide. They stand and fight.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - DAY

White servants are pitching hay off of a cart for Anthony's modest herd of dairy cows and cattle.

John Casor is busy hanging tobacco leaves with other servants. Two musket rounds are heard in the distance. All men stop work. Then another round.

Anthony comes running. He reaches a large bell mounted to a post, grabs the rope, and begins tolling. All servants rush to his side.

ANTHONY

(to the men)

That's the signal! It came from the Parker's. Grab the muskets, strap on your steel. It's a fine day to kill Pamunkey!

The men are preparing at their armory shed. Six Pamunkey warriors charge them from across the field. A volley of arrows misses the men.

Musket blasts bring down two. The men charge the four remaining Indians with swords and battle axes, and make quick work of them.

Anthony, his two teenage sons, and John Casor mount horses.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

To the Parker's!

They head out.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

The modest fighting force has grown in numbers. As they enter a clearing, Pamunkey warriors rush them from the trees.

John Casor dismounts and charges. Four servants, two white and two black, fall in behind him.

Anthony and his two sons fight from atop their horses with muskets and swords. A servant reloads for them.

John Casor quickly adopts a battle tactic. His steel remains strapped to his side. When he confronts a warrior, he first controls the weapon, then knocks him out. John Casor throws a haymaker punch.

When a warrior hits the ground, the squad either cuts his throat, or splits his skull. They are like scavengers, feeding off of the lead tank. Control weapon - haymaker - scavengers. Control weapon - haymaker - scavengers.

An arrow finds John Casor's back. He ignores the arrow and fights on.

The meadow is ultimately won with minimal losses. The men are soaked in blood, including blood from their own wounds. They catch their breath.

JOHN CASOR
Let's find the rest!

He remounts his horse.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The local Northampton church is packed, with planters near the front and servants behind. Captain Scarborough addresses the men.

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH
We have the war plan from Jamestown. It is comprehensive, and has three phases. First, the Pamunkey will be driven back to the original treaty lines. Then, fortresses will be built at the falls of the James, the falls of the York, and a third on the Chickahominy. We will organize a fighting force of all able-bodied men. Once the fortresses are in place, we will hunt the Pamunkey down like the heathen dogs they are and eliminate them from the face of God's earth, once and for all!

The roar from the men, shakes the church.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPER: 1648

Virginia and John Casor are having intercourse atop her trotting horse. He is in the saddle as she faces him, holding on for dear life. The horses' trot provides their needed motion. She screams with each gait, in ecstatic pain.

The horse has pulled up and the two are in a mad embrace. Virginia is exhausted. John Casor whispers in her ear.

JOHN CASOR
Virginia. Virginia.

She pulls her head back.

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)
For seven years, you have made love
to me your way. Now for seven
years, I will make love to you, my
way.

Virginia sighs and moans, squeezes his shoulders and attacks his face with kisses.

INT. MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eight finely-dressed men, including NICHOLAS SPENCER, are seated around a large, heavy wood table in front of a large fireplace, smoking cigars, pipes and drinking ale.

The men include Matthew Pippin and Lt. John Neale, who we remember from the Scarborough wedding announcement gathering.

The entryway door flies open. CAPT. MONTAGUE, a gray-haired man with a prominent mustache, enters with a large leather satchel stuffed with papers. All stand.

NICHOLAS SPENCER
Captain Montague, welcome. I
believe you know everyone.

CAPT. MONTAGUE
Yes. Gentlemen.

NICHOLAS SPENCER
Join us.

Capt. Montague sits at the head of the table and all are seated.

LT. JOHN NEALE
Perhaps we should get straight to
the point. Now that the Pamunkey
are exiled, our Virginia lands have
expanded, significantly.

(MORE)

LT. JOHN NEALE (CONT'D)
While at the same time, demand for commodities produced in the colonies increases each day. Now, the dilemma.

MATTHEW PIPPIN
We can't increase our production without labor.

LT. JOHN NEALE
And the supply of indentures from England has begun to dry up.

CAPT. MONTAGUE
For good reason. The London economy is booming, and workers are needed there.

MATTHEW PIPPIN
All we're getting now are felons.

LT. JOHN NEALE
A sorry lot, impossible to manage.

NICHOLAS SPENCER
Captain Montague has just now returned from England with plans for a most industrious enterprise, The Royal Adventurers, aimed at solving the labor question. Captain Montague.

CAPT. MONTAGUE
The Earl of Warwick has consulted with highest authority, and the crown will support the plan. Our investors have acquired three ships, which will be used to begin transporting African labor to Barbados and Virginia.

MATTHEW PIPPIN
Without indentures.

CAPT. MONTAGUE
Yes. You will have them for life.

MATTHEW PIPPIN
One drawback with the negroes is their cost, at double what we pay for Englishmen.

LT. JOHN NEALE

And their life expectancy, being what it is, warrants no measurable advantage.

CAPT. MONTAGUE

Good point. The scale of the enterprise will allow for a significant reduction in cost.

NICHOLS SPENCER

There are other factors to consider. Tobacco is cultivated over there, so some of the Africans come with skills.

MATTHEW PIPPIN

And negro women make good field workers.

CAPT. MONTAGUE

Ships originating from Africa will arrive here in the spring and early summer, during cultivation, unlike English ships which must arrive later after harvest. All in all, we will have an endless supply with significant savings realized over time.

The men express their collective agreement and approval.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are walking side-by-side in light, casual garments. Virginia wears her hair up and has a more mature demeanor. The weather is breezy. She regards the land.

VIRGINIA

You see this, all of this? Paradise. Our paradise. This is our home. This is where we will always live.

JOHN CASOR

I want my own ground. I want a piece of land that is mine.

VIRGINIA

But why? You don't need land.

JOHN CASOR

I want to provide. A man provides
for his family.

Virginia lets that sink in. She regards him respectfully.

VIRGINIA

We'll begin with Daddy. We must
gain your freedom.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anthony is standing in the corner of the room by the light,
examining some new hand tools. Mary is across the room,
dusting objects on a shelf.

Virginia and John Casor approach the main room, a bit
apprehensively. She stops and clutches his arms.

VIRGINIA

Stay here, so you may hear what is
said.

JOHN CASOR

I will speak to him myself.

John Casor enters the main room and stands before Anthony.
Mary stands discreetly across the room. Virginia eavesdrops
from just outside.

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)

Master Johnson, sir, may I speak
with you?

ANTHONY

Yes John. Yes, of course.

JOHN CASOR

I have served you now for seven
years. I request from you my
freedom.

Anthony appears unprepared for this conversation.

ANTHONY

Hm, seven years, and you want to be
discharged. But you have no
indenture. I am not obliged to
release you at all. You have most
certainly not fulfilled seven years
of labor. You've spent most of your
time on walks and boat rides with
Virginia.

JOHN CASOR

When I work, I work hard for you.

ANTHONY

I bought you to help me build my farm, not entertain my daughter. I served the Bennets ten years.

JOHN CASOR

I want my freedom now.

ANTHONY

After seven years, you may approach me and we will discuss the matter. And all seven years must be spent in the fields.

JOHN CASOR

Master Johnson, sir, on the day I arrived in Virginia, you planted a seed in my mind. It has grown into a dream in my heart.

He pounds his chest.

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)

A dream of owning land and animals. Of having ownership papers with my name on them that say that I am somebody. I want the same opportunity Mister Bennet gave to you. I don't need all of this. One acre, a cow, and a pig that are mine.

ANTHONY

No! If you hadn't spent all your time with Virginia. Now she's twenty-five. Too old to marry.

JOHN CASOR

I am Miss Virginia's man!

A deathly silence floods the room.

ANTHONY

You've spoiled her. I had other plans for my family. You have cost this family dearly. When Virginia was fourteen, I agreed to allow her to choose. Otherwise, you would not be standing here this day. Now she's become an object of gossip.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You've reduced her to an alehouse wench.

Virginia rushes her father at warp speed and slaps him so hard he loses his balance and falls into a chair. She glares at him, eye to eye, for an inordinate amount of time. John Casor gently leads her out of the room.

Mary approaches Anthony from across the room.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

How long have you known?

Mary does not answer.

MARY JOHNSON

We raised two genteel English girls. But underneath Virginia's grace and manners, there is something you don't see. Inside Virginia's chest beats the heart of an African woman. And that African heart can only be tamed by an African man. She wants what I wanted. How many free, young African men are there here? Two or three, and they are woefully inadequate to tame Virginia.

EXT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - DAY

John Casor and Virginia, riding a woman's saddle, ride up to Sir Archer's gate. Both are formally dressed. Two armed guards greet them.

GUARD

Mum?

VIRGINIA

I am here to see Sir Archer.

John Casor helps her dismount.

GUARD

Is he expecting you mum?

VIRGINIA

No, he is not.

GUARD

Who may I say is calling?

VIRGINIA

The seventh child of Virginia.

GUARD

Seventh - child - of Virginia.
Yes mum.

EXT. ENGLISH GARDEN - DAY

Lord Archer and Virginia stroll casually, stopping intermittently to regard the flora as they converse.

SIR ARCHER

Virginia has the most wonderful climate for gardening. But you're not here for plants and flowers.

VIRGINIA

Sir Archer, there are some inequities inherent in Virginia's labor system that I find troubling. European servants who arrive here on indentures have a predetermined amount of time to serve. Four, five, seven years. They have an assurance that they will one day be released to forge their own lives, acquire property, form a family. But the servants who arrive here from Africa, have no such assurances.

SIR ARCHER

Yes. The Europeans all sign contracts to come here and work and live. Their passage is paid by their Master and they pay off the debt over a specified period of time with their labor. The Africans have no such agreements.

VIRGINIA

They're not offered the option.

SIR ARCHER

No. The Africans who arrive here are captives who wind up on ships, usually merchant ships, that go port to port throughout the South Atlantic, trading their goods. The captives are just one of the commodities they trade.

VIRGINIA

When you say captives, you mean slaves.

SIR ARCHER

Well, yes. Slave and slavery are words the English find a bit vulgar. Their use is normally avoided in polite society.

VIRGINIA

Why not offer Africans the same opportunity? Offer them indentures. I'm quite sure there would be many who would be thrilled to live in the New World.

SIR ARCHER

I understand your particular concern over this matter. No one, as yet, has raised the issue. We have so few Negroes in Virginia. A new one arrives, on average, about once per month. We only have three hundred in the entire colony.

VIRGINIA

The Virginia Commonwealth operates under English law.

SIR ARCHER

True, for the most part. There are some statutory matters that are specific to the colonies and those laws are formulated and adjudicated locally, here in the Commonwealth.

VIRGINIA

Slavery is illegal in England, yet it is permitted here.

SIR ARCHER

Yes and no. Servitude, in a myriad of forms, has been a part of the English way of life for a thousand years. A man finds himself with a debt too large to pay, so he pays it off with his labor, over time. As one example.

VIRGINIA

But it is temporary slavery. He can maintain his hope for eventual freedom.

SIR ARCHER

That's right.

VIRGINIA

Since Virginia may have some of its own laws, specific to life here, would it be possible to enact a law that limited servitude, for all, regardless of how, and under what circumstances they arrived?

She has caught him off guard. He gathers his thoughts.

SIR ARCHER

You are a most extraordinary woman. Certainly not the same young girl we encountered on your family's lawn some years ago. Articulate, intrepid. You are the only woman I know who would dare talk politics with a noble.

He gathers his thoughts again.

SIR ARCHER (CONT'D)

Virginia, I was raised in the aristocracy. I have an intimate understanding of the English mind and English thinking. Growing up, I was told that the Irish were inferior to the English. Inferior is a polite way of putting it. But then in school, I learned that the Irish people and the English people are essentially the same stock. We have always shared the same island. How could it be, then, that a group on one end of the island, was superior to a group living in another part?

Virginia's body language suggests frustration and impatience.

SIR ARCHER (CONT'D)

The English view themselves as being superior to other people. Other cultures, other races, other religions. This notion of superiority is imbedded in the English mind. Considering how they view the Irish, people of their own race, neighbors, Christians...how do you suppose they view Africans?

(MORE)

SIR ARCHER (CONT'D)
 People of another color entirely,
 non-Christian, who live a simple,
 Iron Age existence?

VIRGINIA
 But they're not inherently
 inferior.

SIR ARCHER
 They are not. And the proof of that
 stands right before me. If I were
 to place you, now, in the midst of
 some gentle London ladies, the only
 thing remarkable about you would be
 your exotic brown skin and your
 superior beauty. And your father is
 an even better example. He may one
 day be spoken of as a great
 planter. A man who arrived as a
 slave. William Harman, Francis
 Payne, two more.

VIRGINIA
 If I may return to my initial
 query, what about a term limit?

EXT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are walking the horses away from the
 entrance.

VIRGINIA
 We have an ally. But an ally with
 no arrows in his quiver.

EXT. FOREST - RIVERBANK - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are seated on logs.

VIRGINIA
 If you labor seven more years,
 surely he will let you go.

JOHN CASOR
 He will not! Never. Seven years
 will become seven more. I will die
 a slave.

VIRGINIA
 We must keep trying. We'll find a
 way.

JOHN CASOR
No! I will find a way.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Capt. Gouldsmith arrives on horseback, accompanied by a white servant. He dismounts.

John Casor approaches him from nearby. As they speak, Anthony emerges from the front door to witness the exchange.

JOHN CASOR
Captain Gouldsmith, please sir, I seek your help. This man, Master Johnson, he is holding me beyond my indenture. I have fulfilled my seven years, but he will not release me. Can you help me, please sir!

Anthony is now close by.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH
Anthony, what's this about?

ANTHONY
This is nonsense! He has no indenture. He's a slave.

JOHN CASOR
(to Gouldsmith)
The day I arrived in Jamestown, the captain handed him my indenture, the papers. I saw them. But he refused to give them to me.

FLASHBACK:

At the dock, the Captain hands Anthony the bill of sale, and it drops from his pocket.

END FLASHBACK

CAPT. GOULDSMITH
Anthony?

ANTHONY
That was the bill of sale.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH
Which you can produce.

ANTHONY
Of course, of course.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH
I believe, given the circumstances,
that may be needed in order to
settle the matter.

ANTHONY
I'll have to find it.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anthony and Mary are gazing out of the window together.

ANTHONY
I don't have it. It was lost
somehow.

MARY JOHNSON
So, it can't be proven either way.

ANTHONY
No.

MARY JOHNSON
Let him go.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Anthony has convened a gathering of the entire Johnson clan,
including Elizabeth and PHILLIP SCARBOROUGH.

ANTHONY
John Casor has asked to be relieved
of his servitude. I am not inclined
to agree, but I wanted to see how
the rest of you felt on the matter.

PHILLIP SCARBOROUGH
My father established a standard
for our family's servants. After
seven years, they are given a
year's issue of corn, clothing, and
land.

MARY JOHNSON
Including slaves?

PHILLIP SCARBOROUGH
Yes, although there has been only
one.

ELIZABETH
Everyone should be free.

Anthony looks around the room and realizes he's outnumbered.

ANTHONY
Very well. But he won't be
receiving any land.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

Anthony burns a cigar as he relaxes in a chair with his feet up. Mary emerges out of the rear door.

MARY JOHNSON
Visitors. Out front.

ANTHONY
Who?

MARY JOHNSON
Just some people, with bibles and
crosses.

ANTHONY
Bibles and crosses. Hmph.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Anthony exits the front door to find three MEN and two church ladies, who we remember from Landing Day. They hold bibles with crosses around their necks.

ANTHONY
Welcome. We weren't expecting
visitors. Can we offer some tea?

BIBLE MAN
We are here on a matter of the
greatest import and urgency.

ANTHONY
Import and urgency. Alright.

CHURCH LADY #1
It concerns your daughter,
Virginia.

BIBLE MAN
Perhaps we should be forthright.

ANTHONY

Please do.

BIBLE MAN

It has become clear to us...

CHURCH LADY #1

Many of us...

BIBLE MAN

Yes, many, we believe your daughter to be an agent of demonic forces.

ANTHONY

A witch, you mean. Is that what you're saying? She's a witch.

CHURCH LADY #1

All the signs are there.

BIBLE MAN

Barren, never married, argumentative...

CHURCH LADY #1

Outspoken, cavorting with slaves and heathens...

BIBLE MAN

There are witnesses who testify to her licentious, full-moon rituals, with pagan music...

CHURCH LADY #1

Corrupted who knows how many virgins. She even advocated polygamy. A girl having five husbands. I was there.

BIBLE MAN

We felt it is only fair to you, to inform you, before we alert the authorities.

ANTHONY

Authorities. Yes, I see. We're all good Christian folk on this farm. My wife and children, every servant, all baptized. There's a lady, comes around once or twice a month for Bible studies. When she comes, work stops.

BIBLE MAN

We're not here about your servants.
It's your daughter.

ANTHONY

I'll tell you something about my elder daughter. She's got heart. She's got more heart than the five of you put together. She's a merciful, righteous woman. And forgiving. I know. I'm her father. She's a truer Christian than I'll ever be. I realize you've come out here to do good. And you've come a long way. But if you're looking to condemn a sinner, well, you can start with me. Now, I don't want to appear impolite, but I must ask all of you to leave. And please, put all of this business out of your minds.

Anthony returns to the house.

EXT./INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - DAY

As he enters, he finds Virginia just inside the doorway. He passes by her with no acknowledgement nor comment.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Anthony enters to find a nervous Mary.

MARY JOHNSON

I heard. You did the right thing.

ANTHONY

I will not give them my child! You know what they'll do to her. They'll kill her!

MARY JOHNSON

Maybe they're satisfied, with...

ANTHONY

What was all that? Licentious pagan rituals?

MARY JOHNSON

Just a group of young people with a barrel of ale, out playing music and enjoying each other's company.

(MORE)

MARY JOHNSON (CONT'D)

They got together once a month for a while. Elizabeth told me. All very innocent really.

ANTHONY

Look what it's brought us.

Virginia rushes into the room and embraces Anthony.

VIRGINIA

I love you daddy. I love you.
Thank you.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are sitting high in the dunes. He is playing with sand, having it flow out of his fist like an hourglass.

JOHN CASOR

Now I have nothing.

VIRGINIA

You have me.

JOHN CASOR

(warmly)
Yes.

VIRGINIA

We have each other. We will sleep here, under the stars and survive on love. You're free.

JOHN CASOR

I am not free. I will not be free until I am able to provide for you.

VIRGINIA

How?

JOHN CASOR

I will seek my own indenture. If I must work another seven years for my own land, to establish myself, I will.

EXT/INT. PARKER PLANTATION - STABLE - DAY

ROBERT PARKER is tending a horse. John Casor enters.

JOHN CASOR
Mr. Parker, sir.

ROBERT PARKER
Yes John. You've been released.
We heard.

JOHN CASOR
Yes sir. Mr. Parker, I am seeking
land, my own land, and, do you need
servants, sir?

ROBERT PARKER
You're inquiring about an
indenture.

John Casor nods.

ROBERT PARKER (CONT'D)
We always need more labor. How much
land?

JOHN CASOR
Twenty-five acres sir.

ROBERT PARKER
Twenty-five. Your headright will
provide fifty. So, we'd split it.

John Casor nods.

ROBERT PARKER (CONT'D)
Alright, but it would have to be
seven years.

JOHN CASOR
Seven?

Robert Parker nods.

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)
May I think on it, sir?

ROBERT PARKER
Of course you may.

EXT. KENDALL PLANTATION - DAY

John Casor is negotiating with WILLIAM KENDALL near a
cornfield.

WILLIAM KENDALL

Yes, well the most land we would be willing to grant is fifteen acres. The term would need to be five years.

JOHN CASOR

Thank you, sir. I will think on it.

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - DAY

John Casor is negotiating with Lt. John Neale, who we remember from the slavery cabal meeting.

LT. JOHN NEALE

Yes, yes. We'll put you to work. You come on with us. We'll give you the headright after five years.

JOHN CASOR

Fifty acres?

LT. JOHN NEALE

(nods)
All fifty.

JOHN CASOR

I will return tomorrow, sir.

EXT. JOHNSON STABLE - DAY

Mary walks out of the stable carrying two buckets of milk. Virginia runs up.

VIRGINIA

Mummy! John Casor has an indenture for fifty acres. And only five years!

MARY JOHNSON

Where? With whom?

VIRGINIA

The Neale plantation.

MARY JOHNSON

Lieutenant John Neale?

Virginia nods.

MARY JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Go speak to your father. Speak to
him. Go.

Virginia appears confused.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

Anthony is playing air musketeer, trying out a new sword.
Virginia approaches him, hurriedly.

VIRGINIA
Daddy. I have news of John Casor.

ANTHONY
What now?

VIRGINIA
He has an indenture, for fifty
acres, five years.

ANTHONY
None of my concern.

VIRGINIA
It is with Lieutenant Neale.

Anthony's face shifts from pleasure to concern.

ANTHONY
He should have spoken to me.

VIRGINIA
Why?

ANTHONY
Because he'll never see his land.
Neale has over a dozen grievances
by servants. Failure to fulfill
indentures, beatings, starvation.
Has he ascribed his marke to the
document?

VIRGINIA
I believe so.

ANTHONY
He won't receive any land. Not from
Neale.

Mary calls out from the back of the house.

MARY JOHNSON
Tony, the barrister.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Anthony and his barrister are conferring.

BARRISTER
The cow suit is settled with
Lieutenant Neale. You had two
witnesses sign depositions.

ANTHONY
Trying to steal a cow. Neale has no
conscience.

BARRISTER
Now there are two more.

ANTHONY
I must be the most sued man on the
eastern shore.

BARRISTER
Yes, I do believe that is correct.
But the issue here is a bit more
serious than a cow. It concerns
your son John's farm.

ANTHONY
All four hundred and fifty acres?

BARRISTER
Yes, I'm afraid so. A man
possessing the same exact name, a
John Johnson, is claiming the land
to be his.

ANTHONY
Is there no end to this?

BARRISTER
Anthony, you have many friends on
the eastern shore. But there is
also an element here that seems to
want to peck away at you. I believe
they may be envious of your
success, and would prefer your
demise.

ANTHONY
Because I'm African, a negro.

BARRISTER

That may very well be, sir.

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - FIELDS - DAY

John Casor is walking through the plantation. Four BURLY WHITE MEN approach him. One is carrying leg irons. Two carry short chains in their hands.

BURLY WHITE MAN

Welcome to the farm, lad.

They laugh. One man violently pushes John Casor to the ground, as another raises a short chain to strike him.

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - ENTRANCE - DAY

Virginia is sitting impatiently in the late afternoon atop her horse. She looks around, then rides off with a look of concern.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Virginia approaches her mother.

VIRGINIA

Something is amiss with John Casor. We had agreed to meet each day but he has not appeared the entire week.

MARY JOHNSON

I do fear for him.

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - DAY

Virginia walks stealthily through the farm. She sees some crude structures a short distance away and approaches.

John Casor is seated on the ground, leaning against his crude hut. He is in leg shackles, with a long, single chain secured to a nearby tree. His eyes are swollen and nearly closed from beatings.

As Virginia nears him, her pace slows as she sees his condition. Emotion overcomes her. She drops to her knees.

VIRGINIA

What have they done to you?

She kisses his face.

JOHN CASOR

I am alright. They will not stop me. I will have my land.

VIRGINIA

You will not. Daddy is certain that Lieutenant Neale will not honor your indenture. You will have five years of this, if they ever do set you free.

JOHN CASOR

I placed my marke on the indenture.

VIRGINIA

We must get you back. There must be some way, legally, in the courts. She cuddles next to him.

JOHN CASOR

The day your father met me in Jamestown, he was given a piece of paper by the Captain. It fell to the ground. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. I thought it might be something important.

VIRGINIA

What do you think it was? Do you still have it?

JOHN CASOR

You have it. When you began to teach me to read, I felt I could trust you. One day, when everyone was gone, I entered your bedchamber and tucked it inside the pillow you placed on my lap.

VIRGINIA

The bill of sale.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

The door to Virginia's bedchamber flies open. She rushes in and grabs the crimson pillow. She plunges her hand through an open seam and finds the bill of sale.

After inspecting it, she hops up onto her bed, and lies on her side, still clutching the pillow against her body.

After a moment, she jumps off of the bed and races downstairs.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Virginia, emotionally frayed, rushes in to find her mother.

VIRGINIA

Mummy! I have seen him. They're beating him. They have him chained to a tree. He looks horrid.

Anthony enters.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

(to Anthony)

Daddy, we have to do something. They're beating him, I was there. We must do something. Please.

ANTHONY

Nothing we can do. He should have stayed here. Now he's signed an indenture, a legally binding document. I discharged him formally in writing.

Virginia pulls the bill of sale out of her waist, unfolds it, and slaps it down onto a table.

VIRGINIA

What about this?

Mary inspects the document.

MARY JOHNSON

It's John Casor's bill of sale.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Anthony and Virginia meet with the barrister. He is inspecting the bill of sale.

BARRISTER

This is a most unusual case. Little precedent that I am aware of. It's essentially a battle of documents.

VIRGINIA

What of our chances?

BARRISTER

Impossible to say, with any surety. You discharged Mr. Casor in writing. Hopefully, Neale's attorney will not ask for that document to be admitted into court record. Captain Neale has some patronage with the courts, in spite of his reputation. But I give him no advantage there.

He picks up the bill of sale.

BARRISTER (CONT'D)

It all comes down to this.

EXT. JOHNSON STABLES - DAY

Virginia, in her finest, is helped up onto her horse by a white servant. Mary hurries over.

MARY JOHNSON

Where are you going? We must arrange an escort.

VIRGINIA

To better our chances. I will ride alone.

EXT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - DAY

One of the guards helps Virginia off of her horse.

VIRGINIA

You may tell Sir Archer...

GUARD

We know who you are, mum.

EXT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - BALCONY - DAY

Sir Archer and Virginia sip tea.

SIR ARCHER

A most intriguing conundrum. You seek to have his slavery, reinstated.

VIRGINIA

We will argue that it did not lapse.

SIR ARCHER

Indeed. The case poses a number of legal challenges, apart from the documents themselves. You are asking a Virginia court to acknowledge his slavery, to declare him to be a slave for life. This has never been done previously, to my knowledge. Slavery exists here, of course, but as yet has no official legal footing.

Sir Archer sips tea and ponders.

SIR ARCHER (CONT'D)

This man of yours, John Casor, he is more to you than a servant.

VIRGINIA

John Casor is the greatest man alive.

SIR ARCHER

I see. Yes, I do see. Virginia, you will have your man!

INT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

Anthony and his barrister are on one side, with Lt. Neale and his barrister on the other. Virginia and Mary sit behind. John Casor is seated near the front.

The panel of three justices renders their verdict.

CHIEF JUSTICE

A complaint was this day made to this court by the humble petition of Anthony Johnson, negro, against Mister John Neale, that he detaineth one John Casor, a negro, and servant to the plaintiff, under the pretense that the said John Casor is a free man. After seriously considering and maturely weighing the evidence, this court rules that the said John Neale most unjustly kept the said John Casor from his master, Anthony Johnson. John Casor shall forthwith be returned unto the service of his master, Anthony Johnson, and his heirs, forever.

Heavy gavel comes down.

INT. MANOR LIVING ROOM - DAY

Captain Montague is at the head of the big table, meeting with his slavery cabal.

NICHOLAS SPENCER

Transporting Africans in large numbers, ultimately raises a potential quandary, should they revolt. Organized, they could pose a substantial threat.

MATTHEW PIPPIN

We must not repeat the mistakes of the Spanish.

(to Captain Montague)

What can you tell us about Veracruz?

CAPT. MONTAGUE

Nasty business. Hordes of armed runaways, now fighters, raiders.

LT. JOHN NEALE

And the Spanish can do nothing?

CAPT. MONTAGUE

No. These communities are well-established. Safe havens for negros.

LT. JOHN NEALE

We must put strong measures in place. Negroes cannot be permitted same stature in the community as Englishmen.

MATTHEW PIPPIN

The free negroes must be disarmed. In an uprising, that's where the weapons will come from.

LT. JOHN NEALE

The accumulation of wealth by these negro planters must be discouraged.

NICHOLAS SPENCER

There is also the question of heathen conversion. Baptism now offers a path to freedom for some.

CAPT. MONTAGUE

That hole will be plugged. We will permit their conversion, but they will gain no earthly benefit.

The men voice their collective agreement.

EXT. BEACH - SWAMP - DAY

John Casor is at the edge of the swamp, shoveling up soil and stacking it onto a big pile. Virginia approaches.

VIRGINIA

Here you are. What's all the dirt for?

He sets the shovel down and scoops up a big wad of soil.

JOHN CASOR

You see this? You know what this is?

VIRGINIA

Dirt?

JOHN CASOR

Corn. And tobacco. This soil is better than your father's farm. We just have to move it.

VIRGINIA

You want to grow corn here?

JOHN CASOR

And build a house.

VIRGINIA

You can't build a house on sand... or swamp.

JOHN CASOR

Why not?

John Casor is leading his horse down the beach. Strapped to the horse are ropes, dragging a long, straight wood pole.

Back behind the dunes, away from the beach, he is busy digging, excavating a deep hole in the sandy ground. Four long wood poles lie nearby, side by side.

He has positioned one of the poles so that one end is at the bottom of a hole.

Ropes secured to his horse are strapped around the pole. He walks the horse cautiously to get the pole to vertical.

He is leading a horse-drawn cart, piled high with soil.

He shovels planting soil off of the cart into a large, wood-bordered planting area.

He and Virginia are admiring the four vertical pylons, which extend six feet above the level of the ground.

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)

The rest will be easy.

VIRGINIA

How long will it take?

JOHN CASOR

A few months. We will have much corn.

VIRGINIA

And eventually animals. The house, will it be big enough?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, it will be large.

VIRGINIA

(touching her belly)
Big enough for three?

John Casor beams and they embrace.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Seven armed WHITE MEN are atop their horses. Anthony emerges and sizes them up.

ANTHONY

Well, gentlemen, I'd invite you all in for a barrel and a smoke, but this is not a social call.

LEAD WHITE MAN

Johnson, we've come for your muskets and your blades. We'll be taking them with us.

ANTHONY

I see. I'd ask you under what authority, but we all know you have none.

LEAD WHITE MAN

We're here under authority of the 1639 colonial law, prohibiting negroes from possessing arms.

ANTHONY

You know as well as I, that law does not prohibit negroes from possessing arms. It says, "All persons except negroes to be provided with arms and ammunition". The colony doesn't need to provide us with muskets. We already have muskets. We're fighting men here on this land. Good thing we were armed back in forty-four when the Pamunkey raided your farms. No gentlemen, we won't be handing over any weaponry. Not today, nor any other day. Good day to you now.

Anthony returns into his house. The men stand around for a few seconds, regard each other, then slowly turn to leave.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

Anthony is loading muskets. Mary joins him.

MARY JOHNSON

They're gone. What was that?

ANTHONY

I don't like it.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOME - NIGHT

The extended Johnson family, including Elizabeth and Phillip Scarborough, and Anthony's two grown sons are scattered throughout the house. Dinner has been completed, but food still remains on the large dining table.

The men stoke cigars. John Casor and Virginia are the center of attention. Elizabeth and Mary share their excitement over the baby with Virginia.

ELIZABETH

Do you feel anything yet?

VIRGINIA

I'm not sure.

MARY JOHNSON
It's early. You will.

Mary spots Anthony across the room speaking with John Casor and joins them.

ANTHONY
As soon as you have your crop in,
let us know. We'll add it in with
ours...better price that way.

MARY JOHNSON
We want you and Virginia to be
happy, and of course, the baby.

ANTHONY
It's heartening for us to see our
daughter grown up, a mother now.
We often worried about her.

MARY JOHNSON
Her temperament.

ANTHONY
Most erratic at times.

MARY JOHNSON
But we no longer worry.

JOHN CASOR
You have made me feel welcome.

ANTHONY
You're the father of our first
grandchild.

MARY JOHNSON
You're family.

Virginia and Elizabeth share thoughts.

ELIZABETH
Mummy and Daddy appear content. You
too seem blithe. Radiant really.
And you have married a slave. Not
officially, of course. Does it
concern you? It casts you at the
edges. There will be much
disapproval from the mouths of
gossipers.

VIRGINIA

Their insipid words will fall at
their feet. I possess something
they will likely never know.

ELIZABETH

English marriages often abjure
love. I was fortunate.

VIRGINIA

And the fire still burns?

ELIZABETH

Rages.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - NIGHT

A breeze is blowing. A dozen riders trot onto the Johnson grounds, dismount and secure their horses. They pull torches out of their saddles. A man with a lantern provides fire to ignite the torches.

A man lights a large haystack ablaze.

A man sets fire to the stable, with animals trapped within.

A man pours accelerant onto the tobacco crop. Two other men ignite the accelerant.

Men run through the cornfield, setting plants afire.

A man sets bundles of tobacco ablaze.

One man pours accelerant onto a small house, and a second man lights it on fire.

Another man lights a second small house on fire.

Two men set outbuildings afire.

With the plantation ablaze, the men cast their torches to the ground, mount their horses, and gallop off.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Anthony and John Casor are speaking, with Anthony's two sons listening in.

ANTHONY

You'll need tools, so you know
where they are.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
I'll have the men make a stack of
lumber for you. Whatever you need.

JOHN CASOR
Thank you, sir. You are generous.

John Casor smells something in the air.

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)
Smoke. I smell smoke. It is not
tobacco.

John Casor goes to a nearby window and sees the orange glow
outside.

JOHN CASOR (CONT'D)
Fire! Fire outside! Everything is
burning!

The men race outside.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - NIGHT

The men are running, looking to see what can be saved.

ANTHONY
The livestock! Get the animals out!

Anthony's two sons and Phillip head for the stable.

The animals are in peril, as the stable burns around them.
The three men lead animals out.

Anthony and John Casor view the devastation across the
horizon.

JOHN CASOR
I'll get water!

ANTHONY
No, no. It's too late.

In shock, Anthony and John Casor walk through the plantation,
observing the catastrophe in progress.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - DAY

Anthony is walking his property along with John Casor, his
two sons, and nine of his African-born neighbors.

The men include Francis Payne, who we remember from the
Scarborough wedding announcement gathering.

They are in shock as they regard the ruins of the devastation. Building sites and fields still smolder.

ANTHONY

A group came by last week, wanting to seize our weapons.

FRANCIS PAYNE

Who? And why?

ANTHONY

One works for Neale. Another for Pippin. Don't know the rest. Said they were seizing them on account of my being a negro. Cited the 1639 law.

FRANCIS PAYNE

What do you think this means for the rest of us?

ANTHONY JOHNSON

Don't know. What I do know is that we're greatly outnumbered.

The group reaches the arsonists' staging area. John Casor inspects the ground evidence.

JOHN CASOR

There were many horses here, ten or twelve.

Anthony picks up one of the torches.

ANTHONY

Made no attempt to disguise their deed.

JOHN CASOR

Do you know who did this?

ANTHONY

Hatred did this.

Francis Payne sees a group of men over in the distance near the house, beginning to dismount. He points.

FRANCIS PAYNE

Visitors.

Anthony turns and sizes up the group.

ANTHONY
 (to John Casor)
 Get the guns! All of you! Hurry!

John Casor, Anthony's sons and their nine black neighbors, race toward their armory. Anthony hurries toward the house.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Out of breath, Anthony confronts the fifteen VISITORS wearing crosses, many of whom are armed. Some have dismounted and some remain on horseback.

ANTHONY
 You've come on a bad day. I have to ask you all to leave.

VISITOR #1
 (from horseback)
 We are the court of the almighty. The negro devil woman known as Virginia is now convicted. We have come for her. Where is she?

ANTHONY
 Speak for the almighty, do you? When did killing innocent women become the work of the almighty? You won't be taking my child to satisfy your lust for homicide. Not while I'm on this side of the grave.
 (pointing)
 Get off my land!

VISITOR #2
 Why would you even want her? Look at the devastation she's caused you.

ANTHONY
 She's caused. Evil did this. And now I stare down evil for the second time today.

Two men go for the front door.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
 Any man enters my house will not walk out. His body will be carried out.

At that moment, Anthony's squad of friends and family arrives and quickly surrounds the visitors. Each is armed with two hand muskets, with matches smoking. John Casor places a musket into Anthony's hand.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

We've seen your faces. We know who you are. Any of you come on this land in the future you will be fired upon, without warning. Now you have a choice. You can leave, or we'll send you all straight to hell, here and now.

There is a dead, still silence. It drags on. One visitor mounts his horse. The two men on the porch walk to their horses and mount. The remaining visitors mount their horses and they all ride away.

From her bedroom, looking through her glass window, Virginia witnesses the conclusion of the confrontation with a look of extreme horror on her face.

INT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

Anthony, Mary, Virginia and Elizabeth stand, facing three justices. John Casor and Phillip Scarborough sit behind. Anthony's barrister addresses the court.

BARRISTER

The Johnson family has experienced an egregious loss. We therefore request assistance from this court, in the way of forgiveness from the annual head tax for the Johnson women. While they are negroes, they are gentle women and should not be counted as tithable workers.

CHIEF JUSTICE

This family has suffered a most unfortunate fire. Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Johnson have been honorable members of the Northampton community for over twenty-five years. Their known service and hard labors have contributed to the benefit of all. Without some assistance, the family may have difficulty obtaining their livelihood. Therefore, this court hereby excuses these three women, Mary Johnson, Virginia Johnson, and

(MORE)

CHIEF JUSTICE (CONT'D)
 Elizabeth Johnson Scarborough from
 payment of annual taxes and charges
 for the County of Northampton
 public use, for the remainder of
 their natural lives.

EXT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

As the family walks away from the court building, the women
 walk together behind the men.

MARY JOHNSON
 We finally have equal status with
 white women.

ELIZABETH
 Legally at least.

VIRGINIA
 We had to lose the farm to obtain
 it.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anthony has gathered the extended family for an announcement.
 He is both defeated and undefeated.

ANTHONY
 Thirty-five years ago, I was on a
 ship, the James, surrounded by
 unfamiliar people speaking an
 unfamiliar language. I knew not
 where I was headed nor what I would
 find. They put me in with a group
 of Englishmen, marched us off to
 the Bennet plantation on the south
 bank of the James. A year later,
 Pamunkey raided the colony. They
 killed fifty-two men on our farm.
 Only five of us survived. But the
 Bennets would not be defeated. We
 moved the farm out here to
 Northampton and began anew.

Virginia wraps her arms around John Casor's waist and holds
 him tightly.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
 It was the proper decision, with
 the ever-present threat from the
 naturals. Now, this family faces a
 threat, but not from naturals.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

We are threatened by our very neighbors. Fellow farmers. Englishmen. I love Virginia. She has given me freedom and the opportunity to fare well and form this family. But I will never put Virginia, or anything else ahead of the safety and prosperity of my family.

Anthony extends his hand to Mary and she joins him at his side.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Mary and I have discussed the matter and we have made the decision to relocate to Maryland. We will settle our affairs here and go and find land there. My aspiration for the Johnson name, a legacy of merit and prosperity, can no longer be realized here in Virginia.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Virginia, Elizabeth and Mary are huddled up.

VIRGINIA

We're staying. The house is built and we have crops in the ground.

MARY JOHNSON

(to Virginia)

Will you be safe out there? Maybe you should leave.

VIRGINIA

We'll be safe. Lizzy can reach me if anyone needs us.

ELIZABETH

(to Mary)

We're staying, of course. But we don't want to lose touch with you.

VIRGINIA

John and Richard are going with you?

MARY JOHNSON

As soon as everything is settled.

VIRGINIA

It's only about three days?

MARY JOHNSON

Two or three. We have to find a farm.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPER: 1670

Virginia's beachfront property is fully developed. Everywhere you look, in the dunes and behind the dunes, corn is growing. Within a series of wooden pens are four horses, ten cows, a dozen pigs and a chicken coop.

The family's house is a substantial clapboard structure. Forty-five-year-old Virginia stands on her deck watching her twelve and fourteen-year-old sons off in the distance, sword-fight with sticks. Her hair is short and natural.

Her gaze shifts down the beach, where she sees John Casor riding toward her. She walks out to greet him.

JOHN CASOR

They will do it!

He dismounts.

VIRGINIA

Wonderful!

JOHN CASOR

It must go into your name, but it will be ours. Two headrights. A hundred acres!

VIRGINIA

It will be our sons'.

JOHN CASOR

Yes. They will become gentlemen Virginia planters. Both of them.

VIRGINIA

And one day provide for their own families.

They find a soft spot in the sand to sit.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

It doesn't bother you that it must be in my name? It is your triumph.

JOHN CASOR

That means nothing to me.

VIRGINIA

Our boys are both free men,
protected by Virginia law.

Suddenly, John Casor is attacked by his two sons who wrestle him out onto the packed sand. The three of them go at it with the two boys trying to maintain control over their father. But he ultimately takes control over them.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

They almost had you. Another year...

JOHN CASOR

(raised arms)

They will never take me captive! I
am John Casor!

His boys hang playfully off of his shoulders. From the house, Virginia hears Elizabeth call her name.

ELIZABETH (O.C.)

Virginia! Virginia!

Virginia waves. They scurry to the house.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

We have been to Maryland. There is
news.

VIRGINIA

Mummy and Daddy.

ELIZABETH

Daddy, we have lost him I'm afraid.

They share a moment to process the news.

VIRGINIA

What of Mummy?

ELIZABETH

She fares well. She is here, with
us, but will return. There are
legal matters. Daddy has left John
Casor to you in his will.

Virginia smiles at John Casor and they share a casual embrace.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Daddy's only remaining property in Virginia is Angola. He has left it to Richard. But we just received word that there is to be a hearing over it.

VIRGINIA

For what purpose?

ELIZABETH

A mystery. We do not know.

VIRGINIA

We will attend.

INT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

The courtroom is awaiting the four-member white jury and JURY FOREMAN'S decision. RICHARD JOHNSON, Virginia's forty-three-year-old brother, stands aside the family barrister. The COUNTY ATTORNEY stands nearby.

Present in the courtroom are Mary, Elizabeth, Phillip Scarborough, John Casor, Virginia and his two sons, all formally dressed.

The jury is seated. The NEW CHIEF JUSTICE is an unfamiliar face.

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE

In the matter of the probate of the estate of the late Anthony Johnson, negro, in regards to the forty-four-acre farm, registered under the name Angola, what say ye?

JURY FOREMAN

The jury finds that the farm was owned by the man, Anthony Johnson, a man not of English descent, but of African origin. A negro. By virtue of his African origin, per statute, Mr. Johnson was an alien to England. Furthermore, by law, his heirs are likewise deemed aliens, and as such, are therefore not entitled to the proceeds of the decedent's estate.

A buzz vibrates through the courtroom. The Johnson clan is dumbfounded.

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE

This court finds that the forty-four-acre property known as Angola shall now be returned to the Commonwealth of Virginia for appropriate dispensation under the law.

Virginia has lost her composure. She bolts upright.

VIRGINIA

(to Chief Justice)

Alien! Alien? My father was no alien. My father was an Englishman. He and my brothers risked their lives fighting the Pamunkey so you would have the privilege of sitting in that seat. Alien? Oh no! You sir are the alien!

COUNTY ATTORNEY

This is outrageous!

The chief justice puts his hand up to the county attorney.

VIRGINIA

You emigrated here from across the Atlantic, four thousand miles east. My brothers were born here. They are native Virginians! I am the seventh-born child of Virginia, and I demand you give my brother his rightful inheritance!

The courtroom erupts. The chief justice hammers his gavel.

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE

Order! Order! Mrs. Johnson, Madam, remove your family from this courtroom immediately or I will have this woman placed in the stocks!

John Casor stands and places himself between the court and his family.

EXT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

The barrister leaves the court building and sees the Johnson family huddled up outside. Nearby are a set of stocks with one unfortunate man clamped within.

The barrister approaches John Casor and Virginia.

BARRISTER
Come and see me. Today.

INT. BARRISTER'S OFFICE - DAY

The barrister is counseling the couple in his office.

BARRISTER
There was nothing I could do. These
juries now, with these cases..

VIRGINIA
Involving negroes.

BARRISTER
(nods)
Defining your father and your
brother as aliens to England and
The Commonwealth is...an appalling
interpretation of the statute.
These cases are relatively rare,
since the number of negro land
owners has greatly diminished. But
now, this case presents a very
grave dilemma indeed. Under the
law, John is, of course, property.

He gives them a moment to make the connection.

BARRISTER (CONT'D)
You have inherited him by way of
your father's will. We have just
seen how much legal validity a
negro's last will and testament now
bears in The Commonwealth.

JOHN CASOR
None.

BARRISTER
Correct.

VIRGINIA
(to John Casor)
They could take you.
(to barrister)
Could they? Could they take him?

BARRISTER
Certainly. Will they? There is a
move afoot to confiscate negro
property.

VIRGINIA

What shall we do? Is there no way
to protect him?

BARRISTER

I can only counsel you in legal
terms. As long as John is owned by
a negro here in Virginia, his fate
will remain uncertain.

(to Virginia)

If something should happen to you..

VIRGINIA

He'll return to slavery.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - SOLILOQUY

The family is packing up a large two-horse-team wagon. The
animals and their pens are gone. Their corn crop remains in
place.

The boys tie two horses to the back of the wagon.

John Casor embraces Virginia, as they take one long last look
at their paradise lost.

VIRGINIA

(lamenting)

Our home.

JOHN CASOR

You are my home.

VIRGINIA

You're right. As long as we're
together.

JOHN CASOR

We'll move our dream with us to
Maryland.

Virginia smiles and nods.

The family is moving slowly down the beach. Virginia's two
young sons ride the wagon piled high with their belongings,
while she and John Casor follow on foot.

She stops, turns, and walks inland. She gazes back and forth
at the horizon. Her speech moves from grief to rage.

VIRGINIA

Who are you? What has happened to
you? I don't know you.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

You were my first love. And now...
You have betrayed me!
You are not Virginia!
Virginia would never abandon her
own children.
Look at me!
I(!), am Virginia!

John Casor takes hold of her hand, turns her, and the two
continue their journey down the beach.

SUPER:

In 1699, the Virginia Assembly ordered all free people of
African origin currently residing within the borders of the
Commonwealth to leave, to help pave the way for the largest
forced migration of people in human history.