

CHARACTER SIDES

Dembi

DEMBI (28), Black, an attractive female house slave who is comfortable with her station in life.

(The slaves are resting after their escape and near-capture. Bali is wrapping up Emala's legs, which have been scratched and cut. Dembi watches him.)

DEMBI

HOW... HOW YOU PLAN ON... ON GETTING THROUGH ALL THIS?

BALI

WE CAN'T TRUST ANY OF THESE WHITE FOLKS WE SEE ROUND HERE.
WE HEAD NORTH. FOLLOW THE TRAIL TO FREEDOM.

(Dembi shakes her head.)

DEMBI

IT AIN'T THAT SIMPLE...

BALI

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

DEMBI

MORE THAN YOU THINK!
I WAS WORKING IN THE FIELD
FOR THE FAMILY OF VON WHITTLE.
SLAVIN' EVERYDAY, TILL MY BONES WERE BRITTLE.
UNDER THAT HOT SUN, NOT A THING TO DRINK.
MY EYES WERE SO DRY, THAT I COULDN'T BLINK.

I WOULD'VE DONE ANYTHIN' TO GET OUT OF THAT FIELD.
I WAS GLAD I WAS BOUGHT.
BUT WHILE I LIVED THERE, SOME OF THE SLAVES STARTED THEIR
JOURNEY, ONLY TO GET CAUGHT.
THEY WERE TORTURED, TILL DEATH.
ALL FOR TRYING TO BE FREE. LIKE THE HAD NOTHING LEFT...

BALI

HOW MUCH DID YOU HEAR?

DEMBI

ENOUGH TO KNOW THE DANGERS, THERE IS MUCH TO FEAR!

(Bali rubs his chin.)

DEMBI

I MEAN... ITS NOT NOTHIN' YOU DON'T ALREADY KNOW!

BALI

I NEED YOU HERE. TO HELP US... YOU KNOW WHERE TO GO.

(Dembi takes a look at the scars on Emala's legs)

I'D HOPED TO LET YOU GO ONCE WE COVERED ENOUGH GROUND. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO STAY WITH US, THAT WAY WE CANT BE FOUND.

DEMBI

I KNOW YOUR CHANCES ARE SLIM,
BUT I CAN'T SACRIFICE MY LIVELIHOOD.
I CANT LIVE LIFE OUT HERE IN THE WOODS.

(Bali finishes wrapping Emala's legs. He touches her bandages)

BALI

ITS WORTH THE RISK. ANYTHING IS WORTH THE RISK FOR FREEDOM.
Let us rest for the night.
WE WILL START THE JOURNEY AGAIN, AFTER THE SUN RISES AT
FIRST LIGHT.

(They lay down to sleep)

SCENE NINE

(It's dawn, hardly light out. Bali is off hunting rabbits. Dembi sees that Bali has left and Emala is still sleep. Dembi decides that this is her chance to leave.)

DEMBI

IT'S MORNIN' AND THE SUN IS RISIN' SLOW.
NIGHT IS GONE AND I STAND IN ITS GLOW.
THIS CHILD HAS A FATHER THAT LOVES HER SO.
I'LL ONLY GET IN THEIR WAY,
SHOULD I GO?

EVERYDAY LIFE STRIKES A NEW BLOW.
BEFORE MY NEW HOME, MY SPIRIT WAS LOW.
ONE THING I KNOW,
TRIALS MAKE FOR STRANGE BEDFELLOWS.
SHOULD I GO?

EMALA, I RAISED HER SINCE SHE WAS YOUNG.
SWEET GIRL, WHO STILL HAS TO SING SONGS UNSUNG.
IF I GO BACK, WILL THEY BE UNDONE?
I DON'T KNOW.

IF I LEAVE, MY PRESENCE WONT BE MISSED.
HE WON'T GRIEVE. HE'LL FEEL RELIEVED.
HIS HEART WON'T BLEED. THEY WILL PERSIST.
I SHOULD...

(She starts to exit. Emala wakes up.)

EMALA

Ms. Dembi?

(Bali enters with a small animal he caught)

BALI

Found us some grub!

(Dembi rejoins them at the camp. Bali splits up the food for Dembi and Emala to share)

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