

**LINCOLN**  
By Tony Kushner

Based in Part on  
Team of Rivals:  
The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln  
By Doris Kearns Goodwin

Final Shooting Script  
December 20, 2011

EXT. BATTLEFIELD, JENKINS' FERRY, ARKANSAS - DAY

Heavy grey skies hang over a flooded field, the water two feet deep. Cannons and carts, half-submerged and tilted, their wheels trapped in the mud below the surface, are still yoked to dead and dying horses and oxen.

A terrible battle is taking place; two infantry companies, Negro Union soldiers and white Confederate soldiers, knee-deep in the water, staggering because of the mud beneath, fight each other hand-to-hand, with rifles, bayonets, pistols, knives and fists. There's no discipline or strategy, nothing depersonalized: it's mayhem and each side intensely hates the other. Both have resolved to take no prisoners.

HAROLD GREEN (V.O.)

Some of us was in the Second Kansas Colored. We fought the rebs at Jenkins' Ferry last April, just after they'd killed every Negro soldier they captured at Poison Springs.

EXT. PARADE GROUNDS ADJACENT TO THE WASHINGTON NAVY YARD, ANACOSTIA RIVER - NIGHT

Rain and fog. Union Army companies are camped out across the grounds. Preparations are being made for the impending assault on the Confederate port of Wilmington, North Carolina.

Two black soldiers stand before a bivouacked Negro unit: HAROLD GREEN, an infantryman in his late thirties, and IRA CLARK, a cavalryman in his early twenties. ABRAHAM LINCOLN sits on a bench facing Harold and Ira; his stovepipe hat is at his side.

HAROLD GREEN

So at Jenkins' Ferry, we decided warn't taking no reb prisoners. And we didn't leave a one of 'em alive. The ones of us that didn't die that day, we joined up with the 116th U.S. Colored, sir. From Camp Nelson Kentucky.

LINCOLN

What's your name, soldier?

HAROLD GREEN

Private Harold Green, sir.

IRA CLARK  
I'm Corporal Ira Clark, sir. Fifth  
Massachusetts Cavalry. We're  
waiting over there.

He nods in the direction of his cavalry.

IRA CLARK (CONT'D)  
We're leaving our horses behind,  
and shipping out with the 24th  
Infantry for the assault next week  
on Wilmington.

LINCOLN  
(to Harold Green:)  
How long've you been a soldier?

HAROLD GREEN  
Two year, sir.

LINCOLN  
Second Kansas Colored Infantry,  
they fought bravely at Jenkins'  
Ferry.

HAROLD GREEN  
That's right, sir.

IRA CLARK  
They killed a thousand rebel  
soldiers, sir. They were very  
brave.  
(hesitating, then)  
And making three dollars less  
each month than white  
soldiers.

Harold Green is a little startled at Clark's bluntness.

HAROLD GREEN  
Us 2nd Kansas boys, whenever we  
fight now we -

IRA CLARK  
Another three dollars subtracted  
from our pay for our uniforms.

HAROLD GREEN  
That was true, yessir, but that  
changed -

IRA CLARK  
Equal pay now. Still no  
commissioned Negro officers.

LINCOLN  
I am aware of it, Corporal Clark.

IRA CLARK

Yes, sir, that's good you're aware,  
sir. It's only that -

HAROLD GREEN

(to Lincoln, trying to  
change the subject:)

You think the Wilmington attack is  
gonna be -

IRA CLARK

Now that white people have  
accustomed themselves to seeing  
Negro men with guns, fighting on  
their behalf, and now that they can  
tolerate Negro soldiers getting the  
same pay - in a few years perhaps  
they can abide the idea of Negro  
lieutenants and captains. In fifty  
years, maybe a Negro colonel. In a  
hundred years - the vote.

Green's offended at the way Clark is talking to Lincoln.

LINCOLN

What'll you do after the war,  
Corporal Clark?

IRA CLARK

Work, sir. Perhaps you'll hire me.

LINCOLN

Perhaps I will.

IRA CLARK

But you should know, sir, that I  
get sick at the smell of bootblack  
and I can't cut hair.

Lincoln smiles.

LINCOLN

I've yet to find a man could cut  
mine so it'd make any difference.

HAROLD GREEN

You got springy hair for a white  
man.

Lincoln laughs.

LINCOLN

Yes, I do. My last barber hanged  
himself. And the one before that.  
Left me his scissors in his will.

Green laughs.

TWO WHITE SOLDIERS have come up, two young kids, nervous and  
excited.

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER  
President Lincoln, sir?

LINCOLN  
Evening, boys.

SECOND WHITE SOLDIER  
Damn! Damn!  
We, we saw you, um. We were at, at -

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER  
We was at Gettysburg!

HAROLD GREEN  
You boys fight at Gettysburg?

SECOND WHITE SOLDIER  
DAMN I can't believe it's -

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER (CONT'D)  
(to Green, with mild  
contempt)  
Naw, we didn't *fight* there.  
We just signed up last month.  
We saw him two years ago at the  
cemetery dedication.

SECOND WHITE SOLDIER  
Yeah, we heard you speak! We...  
DAMN DAMN DAMN! Uh, hey, how tall  
are you anyway?!

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER  
Jeez, SHUT up!

LINCOLN  
Could you hear what I said?

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER  
No, sir, not much, it was-

SECOND WHITE SOLDIER  
(he recites, fast and  
mechanically:)  
"Four score and seven years ago,  
our fathers brought forth on this  
continent a new nation, conceived  
in liberty and dedicated to the

proposition that all men are created equal."

LINCOLN

That's good, thank you for -

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are, we are, we are met on a great battlefield of that war."

LINCOLN

Thank you, that's -

SECOND WHITE SOLDIER

"We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is..."

(He chokes up a little.)

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER

His uncles, they died on the second day of fighting.

SECOND WHITE SOLDIER

I know the last part. "It is, uh, it is rather -"

A VOICE (O.C.)

Company up! Move it out!

Soldiers all over the field rise up at the mustering of the troops. Names of regiments, brigades, divisions are called: all across the field, the men put out fires, put on knapsacks.

LINCOLN

(to the two white soldiers:)

You fellas best find your company.

FIRST WHITE SOLDIER

(saluting Lincoln:)

Thank you, sir. God bless you!

LINCOLN

God bless you.

The second white soldier salutes, and the two move out.

Green salutes Lincoln as well and glances at Clark, who remains, looking down. Green leaves. Clark looks up, salutes Lincoln and, turning smartly, walks toward his unit.

Then he stops, turns back, faces Lincoln, who watches him. A beat, and then, in a tone of admiration and cautious admonishment, reminding Lincoln of his promise:

IRA CLARK

"That we here highly resolve that  
these dead shall not have died in  
vain - "

Clark salutes Lincoln again, turns again and walks away. Lincoln watches him go. As he walks into the fog, Clark continues reciting in a powerful voice:

IRA CLARK (CONT'D)

" - That this nation, under God,  
shall have a new birth of freedom -  
and that government of the people,  
by the people, for the people,  
shall not perish from the earth."

Lincoln watches Clark until the fog's swallowed him up.

TITLE:

**JANUARY, 1865**

**TWO MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S RE-ELECTION**

**THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR IS NOW IN ITS FOURTH YEAR**

EXT. A SHIP AT SEA - NIGHT

A huge, dark, strange-looking steamship, part wood and part iron, turreted like a giant ironclad monitor, is plowing through the choppy black waters of an open sea.

Lincoln is alone, in darkness, on the deck, which has no railing, open to the sea. The ship's tearing through rough water, but there's little pitching, wind or spray. The deck is dominated by the immense black gunnery turret.

LINCOLN (V.O.)

It's nighttime. The ship's moved  
by some terrible power, at a  
terrific speed.

Lincoln stares out towards a barely discernible horizon, indicated by a weird, flickering, leaden glow, which appears to recede faster than the fast-approaching ship.

LINCOLN (V.O.)

Though it's imperceptible in the darkness, I have an intuition that we're headed towards a shore. No one else seems to be aboard the vessel. I'm alone.

INT. MARY'S BOUDOIR, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The room's cozy, attractive, cluttered, part dressmaker's workshop, part repository of Mary's endless purchases: clothing, fabrics, knickknacks, carpets. Books everywhere.

Lincoln reclines on a French chair, too small for his lengthy frame. He's in shirtsleeves, vest unbuttoned and tie unknotted, shoeless. He has an open folio filled with documents on his lap.

MARY LINCOLN sits opposite, in a nightgown, housecoat and night cap. She watches him in her vanity mirror.

She looks frightened.

**TITLE: THE WHITE HOUSE**

LINCOLN

I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space...were it not that I have bad dreams.

I reckon it's the speed that's strange to me. I'm used to going a deliberate pace.

Mary looks at him, stricken with alarm.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I should spare you. I shouldn't tell you my dreams.

MARY

I don't want to be spared if you aren't! And you spare me nothing.

He looks down at the carpet, then back up at her.

MARY (CONT'D)

Perhaps perhaps it's the assault on Wilmington port. You dream about the ship before a battle, usually.



LINCOLN  
 (rapping lightly on his  
 forehead:)  
 How's the coconut?

MARY  
 Beyond description.

She delicately touches her head.

MARY (CONT'D)  
 Almost two years, nothing mends.  
 Another casualty of the war. Who  
 wants to listen to a useless woman  
 grouse about her carriage accident?

LINCOLN  
 I do.

MARY  
 Stuff! You tell me dreams, that's  
 all, I'm your soothsayer, that's  
 all I am anymore, I'm not to be  
 trusted with - Even if it wasn't a  
 carriage accident, even if it was  
 an attempted assassination -

LINCOLN  
 It was most probably an -

MARY  
 It was an assassin. Whose intended  
 target was you.

LINCOLN  
 How's the plans for the big shindy  
 progressing?

MARY  
 I don't want to talk about parties!  
 You don't care about parties.

LINCOLN  
 Not much but they're a necessary -

Mary studies Lincoln, thinking. Then a revelation:

MARY  
 I know...I know what it's about.  
 The ship, it isn't Wilmington Port,  
 it's not a military campaign! It's  
 the amendment to abolish slavery!  
 Why else would you force me to

invite demented radicals into my  
home?

Lincoln closes his folio.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're going to try to get the  
amendment passed in the House of  
Representatives, before the term  
ends, before the Inauguration.

LINCOLN

(standing:)

Don't spend too much money on the  
flubdubs.

Mary stands, goes up to him.

MARY

No one's loved as much as you, no  
one's ever been loved so much, by  
the people, you might do anything  
now. Don't, don't waste that power  
on an amendment bill that's sure of  
defeat.

Seeing that he's not going to discuss this, she turns away,  
walking to an open window.

MARY (CONT'D)

Did you remember Robert's coming  
home for the reception?

Lincoln nods, though Mary isn't bothering to look at him.

MARY (CONT'D)

I knew you'd forget.

She closes the window.

MARY (CONT'D)

That's the ship you're sailing on.  
The Thirteenth Amendment. You  
needn't tell me I'm right. I know I  
am.

She watches as he leaves the room, smiling in bitter victory:  
she's right.

INT. HALLWAY, LEAVING MARY'S BOUDOIR - NIGHT

Lincoln encounters ELIZABETH KECKLEY, a light-skinned black woman, 38, Mary's dressmaker and close friend, holding a dark-blue velvet bodice embroidered with jet beads.

LINCOLN  
It's late, Mrs. Keckley.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY  
(holding out the bodice:)  
She needs this for the grand  
reception.

Lincoln bends down to look at the intricate beading.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY (CONT'D)  
It's slow work.

He nods, smiles, straightens up.

LINCOLN  
Good night.

He continues down the hall. Mrs. Keckley starts to enter Mary's boudoir, then stops, sensing something amiss. She calls quietly after Lincoln:

ELIZABETH KECKLEY  
(concerned, a little  
exasperated:)  
Did you tell her a dream?

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, SECOND FLOOR, WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

A working room, sparsely furnished. Lincoln's desk is heaped with files, books, newspapers. The desk's near a window, now open. Comfortable chairs and a rocker are in a corner. Near the fireplace, in which embers are dying, there's a long table, eight chairs around it, settings by each chair of inkwells and pens.

Dozens of maps cover the walls and the crowded bookcases.

Lincoln opens the door and enters to find his 10 year-old son TAD LINCOLN near the hearth, sleeping, sprawled on a very large military map. Lead toy soldiers are scattered across it.

A large mahogany box, imprinted ALEXANDER GARDNER STUDIOS, is open near Tad's head. The box contains large glass plates, each framed in wood; these are photographic negatives. Tad's been looking at several, which lie near him on the map.

Lincoln kneels by Tad and looks down at the map, a topographical and strategic survey of the no-man's land between Union and Confederate forces at Petersburg. He scrutinizes the precisely drawn blue and grey lines.

He lifts one of the glass plates and holds it to the firelight: it's a large photographic negative of a young black boy. There's a caption, in elegant cursive script: "Abner, age 12 - \$500"

And another: "Two young boys, 10 & 14 - \$700"

Lincoln puts the plates back in the box and closes the lid. Carefully brushing the toy soldiers aside, he lies down beside Tad. He touches Tad's hair and kisses his forehead. Tad stirs as Lincoln gets on all fours; without really waking up, knowing the routine, Tad climbs onto his father's back. Tad holds on as his father stands, weary, and maybe a little surprised to find his growing son slightly heavier than he was the night before.

TAD  
(fast asleep:)  
Papa...

LINCOLN  
Hmm?

TAD  
Papa I wanna see Willie.

LINCOLN  
(whispering:)  
Me too, Taddie. But we can't.

TAD  
Why not?

LINCOLN  
Willie's gone. Three years now.  
He's gone.

Lincoln carries Tad out of the room, closing the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON - MORNING

A new flagpole is being dedicated. Lincoln, in a black overcoat and his stovepipe hat, and Treasury Secretary WILLIAM FESSENDEN, 59, stand by the pole. They face an audience of officials, clerks, dignitaries, wives, soldiers. A Marine band finishes a jaunty instrumental rendition of "We Are Coming Father Abra'am."

Two soldiers fasten a flag to the halyards. Lincoln moves into place; as the crowd applauds, he takes a sheet of paper from inside his hat and glances at it. Then he looks up.

LINCOLN

The part assigned to me is to raise the flag, which, if there be no fault in the machinery, I will do, and when up, it will be for the people to keep it up.

He puts the paper away. The audience waits, expecting more.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

That's my speech.

He smiles at them. They applaud, some laughing. As Lincoln turns the crank, hoisting the flag, a solo trumpet plays "We Are Coming Father Abra'am" and the audience joins in. Among them, Secretary of State WILLIAM SEWARD, 64, in a thick, exquisite winter coat and hat, and Lincoln's dapper assistant secretary, JOHN HAY, 27. Seward looks pleased.

AUDIENCE

"We are coming, Father Abra'am,  
three hundred thousand more,  
From Mississippi's winding stream  
and from New England's shore..."  
We leave our plows and workshops,  
our wives and children dear,  
With hearts too full for utterance,  
With but a silent tear.  
We're coming Father Abra'am..."

EXT. A CARRIAGE, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON - MORNING

In a four-door carriage, top down, Seward sits opposite Lincoln. Hay, next to Seward, organizes papers in a portfolio on his lap.

SEWARD

Even if every Republican in the House votes yes - far from guaranteed, since when has our party unanimously supported anything? - but say all our fellow Republicans vote for it. We'd still be twenty votes short.

LINCOLN

Only twenty.

SEWARD

Only twenty!

LINCOLN

We can find twenty votes.

SEWARD

Twenty House Democrats who'll vote to abolish slavery! In my opinion -

LINCOLN

To which I always listen.

SEWARD

Or pretend to.

LINCOLN

With all three of my ears.

SEWARD

We'll win the war soon - It's inevitable, isn't it?

LINCOLN

Ain't won yit.

SEWARD

You'll begin your second term with semi-divine stature. Imagine the possibilities peace will bring! Why tarnish your invaluable luster with a battle in the *House*? It's a rats' nest in there, the same gang of talentless hicks and hacks that rejected the amendment ten months back. We'll lose.

Lincoln smiles.

LINCOLN

I like our chances now.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

Lincoln is at his desk, Hay feeding him documents to read and sign. Seward warms himself by the fireplace, holding a brandy.

SEWARD

Consider the obstacles that we'd face. The aforementioned two-thirds majority needed to pass an amendment: we have a Republican

majority, but barely more than  
fifty percent -

LINCOLN

Fifty-six.

SEWARD

We need Democratic support. There's  
none to be had.

LINCOLN

Since the House last voted on the  
amendment there's been an election.  
Sixty-four Democrats lost their  
House seats in November. That's  
sixty-four Democrats looking for  
work come March.

SEWARD

I know, but that's -

LINCOLN

They don't need to worry  
about re-election, they can  
vote however it suits 'em.

There's a knock at the office door.

SEWARD

But we can't, um, buy the  
vote for the amendment. It's  
too important.

LINCOLN

(to Hay:)  
Might as well let 'em in.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I said nothing of buying anything.  
We need twenty votes was all I  
said. Start of my second term,  
plenty of positions to fill.

Hay opens the door to the outer office, admitting the sound  
of a sizable crowd. JOHN NICOLAY, 33, Lincoln's rather severe  
German-born senior secretary, ushers in MR. JOLLY, mid-40s,  
mud-spattered coat, hat in hands, followed by MRS. JOLLY,  
similarly road-worn, holding a suitcase. Lincoln stands.

JOHN NICOLAY

Mr. President, may I present Mr.  
and Mrs. Jolly who've come from  
Missouri to -

MR. JOLLY

From Jeff City, President.

Lincoln shakes Mr. Jolly's hand. Mrs. Jolly curtseys.

LINCOLN

Mr. Jolly. Ma'am. This by the  
fire's Secretary of State Seward.

Seward nods slightly as he lights a Cuban cigar.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Jeff City.

Lincoln looks at the Jollys. They are worried and a little  
awed.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I heard tell once of a Jefferson  
City lawyer who had a parrot that'd  
wake him each morning crying out,  
"Today is the day the world shall  
end, as scripture has foretold."  
And one day the lawyer shot him for  
the sake of peace and quiet, I  
presume, thus fulfilling, for the  
bird at least, its prophecy!

Lincoln smiles. The Jollys don't get it. Mr. Jolly looks back  
at Seward, who gestures for him to speak, then exhales a  
plume of smoke.

MR. JOLLY

(launching into his  
prepared speech:)

They's only one tollbooth in Jeff  
City, t' the southwest 'n this man  
Heinz Sauermagen from Rolla been in  
illegal possession for near two  
yar, since your man General  
Schofield set him up there. But  
President Monroe give that tollgate  
to my granpap and Quincy Adams give  
my pap a letter saying it's our'n  
for keeps. Mrs. Jolly got the -

(to his wife:)

Show Mr. Lincoln the Quincy Adams  
letter.

Mrs. Jolly opens the suitcase and begins to dig frantically  
for the letter.

LINCOLN

That's unnecessary, Mrs. Jolly.  
Just tell me what you want from  
me.

Seward exhales more smoke.



Mr. Jolly starts coughing, while Mrs. Jolly tries to fan away the cigar smoke with the Quincy Adams letter.

MRS. JOLLY

Mr. Jolly's emphysema don't care for cigars.

SEWARD

Madame. Do you know about the proposed Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution -

MRS. JOLLY

Yes sir, everybody knows of it. The President favors it.

SEWARD

Do you?

MRS. JOLLY

We do.

SEWARD

You know that it abolishes slavery?

MRS. JOLLY

Yes sir. I know it.

SEWARD

And is that why you favor it?

MRS. JOLLY

What I favor's ending the war. Once't we do away with slavery, the rebs'll quit fighting, since slavery's what they're fighting for. Mr. Lincoln, you always says so. With the amendment, slavery's ended and they'll give up. The war can finish then.

SEWARD

If the war finished first, before we end slavery, would -

MRS. JOLLY

President Lincoln says the war won't stop unless we finish slavery-

SEWARD

But if it did. The South is exhausted. If they run out of bullets and men, would you still

want your, uh - Who's your representative?

LINCOLN

Jeff City? That's, uh, Congressman Burton?

MRS. JOLLY

"Beanpole" Burton, I mean, Josiah Burton, yes, sir!

LINCOLN

(to Mrs. Jolly:)

Republican. Undecided on the question of the amendment, I believe. Perhaps you could call on him and inform him of your enthusiasm.

MRS. JOLLY

Yeah...

SEWARD

Madam? If the rebels surrender next week, would you, at the end of this month, want Congressman Burton to vote for the Thirteenth Amendment?

Mrs. Jolly is puzzled, and looks to Mr. Jolly. Then:

MRS. JOLLY

If that was how it was, no more war and all, I reckon Mr. Jolly'd much prefer not to have Congress pass the amendment.

Mr. Jolly nods. Seward glances at Lincoln, then turns back to the Jollys:

SEWARD

And why's that?

Mr. Jolly's surprised: the answer's so obvious.

MR. JOLLY

(in a hoarse voice:)

Niggers.

MRS. JOLLY

If he don't have to let some Alabama coon come up to Missouri, steal his chickens, and his job, he'd much prefer that.

Seward takes the letter from Mrs. Jolly and hands it to Lincoln.

SEWARD

(to Lincoln, quietly:)

The people!

I begin to see why you're in such a great hurry to put it through.

LINCOLN

(to Mr. Jolly:)

Would you let me study this letter, sir, about the tollbooth? Come back to me in the morning and we'll consider what the law says.

Lincoln stands.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

And be sure to visit "Beanpole" and tell him that you support passage of the Amendment. As a military necessity.

The Jollys nod, skeptical now.

NICOLAY

(to the Jollys:)

Thank you.

Nicolay escorts them out. Before he closes the door:

LINCOLN

Oh, Nicolay? When you have a moment.

Nicolay nods and steps into the anteroom, where dozens more petitioners are waiting to speak with Lincoln. Hay confers with the doorman. Seward closes the door behind them.

Lincoln kneels at the fireplace, stoking the fire. He puts more wood in, then stands. Seward watches him, then:

SEWARD

If procuring votes with offers of employment is what you intend, I'll fetch a friend from Albany who can supply the skulking men gifted at this kind of shady work. Spare me the indignity of actually speaking to Democrats. Spare you the exposure and liability.

There is a sharp knock on the closed door, followed by two long ones.

LINCOLN

Pardon me, that's a distress signal, which I am bound by solemn oath to respond to.

Lincoln opens the door. Tad enters, cross.

TAD

Tom Pendel took away the glass camera plates of slaves Mr. Gardner sent over because Tom says mama says they're too distressing, but-

LINCOLN

You had nightmares all night, mama's right to -

TAD

But I'll have worse nightmares if you don't let me look at the plates again!

LINCOLN

Perhaps.

SEWARD

We can't afford a single defection from anyone in our party...not even a single Republican absent when they vote. You know who you've got to see.

Nicolay enters. Lincoln turns to him.

LINCOLN

Send over to Blair House. Ask Preston Blair can I call on him around five o'clock.

SEWARD

(a shudder, a swallow of brandy:)

God help you. God alone knows what he'll ask you to give him.

INT. THE LIBRARY, BLAIR HOUSE, WASHINGTON - EVENING

Lincoln's perched on the edge of an ottoman.

LINCOLN

If the Blairs tell 'em to, no  
Republican will balk at voting for  
the amendment.

The room is baronial. PRESTON BLAIR, patriarch of his wealthy and powerful family, 72 years old, sits facing his son, MONTGOMERY BLAIR, 50, whip-thin. A fire blazes in a massive fireplace behind Monty. Preston's handsome, elegant daughter, ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE, 45, sits across from Monty, next to Tad, who's wearing a Union infantryman's uniform, a real musket by his side.

MONTGOMERY BLAIR

No conservative Republican is what  
you mean -

PRESTON BLAIR

All Republicans ought to be  
conservative, I founded this party -  
in my own goddamned home - to be a  
*conservative* antislavery party, not  
a hobbyhorse for goddamned radical  
abolitionists and -

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE

Damp down the dyspepsia, daddy,  
you'll frighten the child.

MONTGOMERY BLAIR

(to Lincoln:)

You need us to keep the  
conservative side of the party in  
the traces while you diddle the  
radicals and bundle up with  
Thaddeus Stevens's gang. You need  
our help.

LINCOLN

Yes, sir, I do.

MONTGOMERY BLAIR

Well, what do we get?

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE

Whoo! Blunt! Your manners, Monty,  
must be why Mr. Lincoln pushed you  
out of his cabinet.

PRESTON BLAIR

He was pushed out -

MONTGOMERY BLAIR

I wasn't pushed.

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE (CONT'D)  
 (smiling sarcastically:)  
 Oh of course you weren't.

PRESTON BLAIR He was pushed out to placate the goddamn radical abolishonists!	MONTGOMERY BLAIR (to Tad:) I agreed to resign.
--	--

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE (CONT'D)  
 (a nod at Tad:)  
 Oh Daddy, please!

PRESTON BLAIR  
 You don't mind, boy, do you?

LINCOLN  
 He spends his days with soldiers.

TAD  
 They taught me a song!

PRESTON BLAIR  
 Did they? Soldiers know all manner  
 of songs. How's your brother Bob?

TAD  
 He's at school now, but he's coming  
 to visit in four days! For the  
 shindy!

PRESTON BLAIR  
 At school! Ain't that fine! Good  
 he's not in the army!

TAD  
 Oh he wants to be, but mama said he  
 can't -

PRESTON BLAIR  
 Dangerous life, soldiering.

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE  
 Your mama is wise to keep him clean  
 out of that.

PRESTON BLAIR  
 Now your daddy knows that what I  
 want, in return for all the help I  
 give him, is to go down to Richmond  
 like he said I could, soon as  
 Savannah fell, and talk to  
 Jefferson Davis. Give me terms I

can offer to Jefferson Davis to start negotiating for peace. He'll talk to me!

MONTGOMERY BLAIR

Conservative members of your party want you to listen to overtures from Richmond. That above all.

Two black servants who have entered begin to pour and serve tea.

MONTGOMERY BLAIR (CONT'D)

They'll vote for this rash and dangerous amendment only if every other possibility is exhausted.

PRESTON BLAIR

Our Republicans ain't abolitionists. We can't tell our people they can vote yes on abolishing slavery unless at the same time we can tell 'em that you're seeking a negotiated peace.

The Blairs look at Lincoln, waiting for an answer.

EXT. OUTSIDE BLAIR HOUSE - NIGHT

A light snow's beginning to fall. A lacquered coach stands outside the house, the Blair crest in gold on its doors.

Elizabeth Blair Lee, a blanket in her arms, comes out of the house, talking to LEO, an elderly black servant, formerly a slave belonging to the Blairs. They're followed by an elderly black woman in a housekeeper's uniform.

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE

Leo, it's a hundred miles to Richmond. Get him drunk so he can sleep.

LEO

Yes'm.

Elizabeth goes to the carriage, where Preston awaits. She passes the blanket through the carriage window and tucks it around her father.

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE

Here, daddy.

PRESTON BLAIR  
Oh! Thank you.

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE  
(fussing with the  
blanket:)  
Let's fix this up...

PRESTON BLAIR  
Where's my hat?

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE  
Leo has your hat. All right?

As Leo climbs into the carriage, Elizabeth kisses her hand, then slaps the kiss on her father's cheek.

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE (CONT'D)  
Go make peace.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

The cabinet has assembled. Lincoln heads the table, Seward at his left and EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War, 51, barrel-shaped, long bearded, bespectacled, at his right. Next to him are Secretary of the Navy GIDEON WELLES, 63, luxurious white hair (it's a wig) and a flowing snowy beard; Postmaster General WILLIAM DENNISON, 50; Secretary of the Interior JOHN USHER, 49; Secretary of the Treasury WILLIAM FESSENDEN, 59; and Attorney General JAMES SPEED, 53.

Nicolay and Hay are in chairs behind Lincoln, taking notes.

LINCOLN  
(to Stanton:)  
Thunder forth, God of War!

Stanton clears his throat. He's noticed the singed edge.

STANTON  
We'll commence our assault on  
Wilmington from the sea.  
(peevd:)  
Why is this burnt? Was the boy  
playing with it?

LINCOLN  
It got took by a breeze several  
nights back.

STANTON  
This is an official War Department  
map!



SEWARD

And the entire cabinet's waiting to hear what it portends.

WELLES

A bombardment. From the largest fleet the Navy has ever assembled.

LINCOLN

(to Welles:)

Old Neptune! Shake thy hoary locks!

Welles stands.

WELLES

Fifty-eight ships are underway, of every tonnage and firing range.

Welles gestures on the map to the positions of many ships.

STANTON

We'll keep up a steady barrage. Our first target is Fort Fisher. It defends Wilmington Port.

Stanton indicates the lines tracing artillery trajectories. These converge particularly heavily on Fort Fisher.

JAMES SPEED

A steady barrage?

STANTON

A hundred shells a minute.

There's a moment of shocked silence.

STANTON (CONT'D)

Till they surrender.

WILLIAM FESSENDEN

Dear God.

WELLES

Yes. Yes.

LINCOLN

Wilmington's their last open seaport. Therefore...

STANTON

Wilmington falls, Richmond falls after.

SEWARD

And the war... is done.

The rest of the cabinet applauds, foot stomping, table slapping. Only John Usher doesn't join in.

JOHN USHER

Then why, if I may ask are we not concentrating the nation's attention on Wilmington? Why, instead, are we reading in the Herald -

(he smacks a newspaper on the table)

- that the anti-slavery amendment is being precipitated onto the House floor for debate - because your eagerness, in what seems an unwarranted intrusion of the Executive into Legislative prerogatives, is compelling it to it's... to what's likely to be its premature demise? You signed the Emancipation Proclamation, you've done all that can be expected -

JAMES SPEED

The Emancipation Proclamation's merely a war measure. After the war the courts'll make a meal of it.

JOHN USHER

When Edward Bates was Attorney General, he felt confident in it enough to allow you to sign -

JAMES SPEED

(a shrug:)

Different lawyers, different opinions. It frees slaves as a military exigent, not in any other -

LINCOLN

I don't recall Bates being any too certain about the legality of my Proclamation, just it wasn't downright criminal. Somewhere's in between. Back when I rode the legal circuit in Illinois I defended a woman from Metamora named Melissa Goings, 77 years old, they said she murdered her husband; he was 83. He was choking her; and, uh, she grabbed ahold of a stick of fire-

wood and fractured his skull, 'n he died. In his will he wrote "I expect she has killed me. If I get over it, I will have revenge."

This gets a laugh.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

No one was keen to see her convicted, he was that kind of husband. I asked the prosecuting attorney if I might have a short conference with my client. And she and I went into a room in the courthouse, but I alone emerged. The window in the room was found to be wide open. It was believed the old lady may have climbed out of it. I told the bailiff right before I left her in the room she asked me where she could get a good drink of water, and I told her Tennessee. Mrs. Goings was seen no more in Metamora. Enough justice had been done; they even forgave the bondsman her bail.

JOHN USHER

I'm afraid I don't -

LINCOLN

I decided that the Constitution gives me war powers, but no one knows just exactly what those powers are. Some say they don't exist. I don't know. I decided I needed them to exist to uphold my oath to protect the Constitution, which I decided meant that I could take the rebels' slaves from 'em as property confiscated in war. That might recommend to suspicion that I agree with the rebs that their slaves are property in the first place. Of course I don't, never have, I'm glad to see any man free, and if calling a man property, or war contraband, does the trick... Why I caught at the opportunity. Now here's where it gets truly slippery. I use the law allowing for the seizure of property in a war knowing it applies only to the property of governments and

citizens of belligerent nations.  
 But the South ain't a nation,  
 that's why I can't negotiate with  
 'em. So *if* in fact the Negroes are  
 property according to law, have I  
 the right to take the rebels'  
 property from 'em, if I insist  
 they're rebels only, and not  
 citizens of a belligerent country?  
 And slipperier still: I maintain it  
 ain't our actual Southern states in  
 rebellion, but only the rebels  
 living in those states, the laws of  
 which states remain in force. *The  
 laws of which states remain in  
 force.* That means, that since it's  
 states' laws that determine whether  
 Negroes can be sold as slaves, as  
 property - the Federal government  
 doesn't have a say in that, least  
 not yet -

(a glance at Seward,  
 then:)

- then Negroes in those states are  
 slaves, hence property, hence my  
 war powers allow me to confiscate  
 'em as such. So I confiscated 'em.  
 But if I'm a respecter of states'  
 laws, how then can I legally free  
 'em with my Proclamation, as I  
 done, unless I'm cancelling states'  
 laws? I felt the war demanded it;  
 my oath demanded it; I felt right  
 with myself; and I hoped it was  
 legal to do it, I'm hoping still.

He looks around the table. Everyone's listening.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Two years ago I proclaimed these  
 people emancipated - "then,  
 thenceforward and forever free."  
 But let's say the courts decide I  
 had no authority to do it. They  
 might well decide that. Say there's  
 no amendment abolishing slavery.  
 Say it's after the war, and I can  
 no longer use my war powers to just  
 ignore the courts' decisions, like  
 I sometimes felt I had to do. Might  
 those people I freed be ordered  
 back into slavery? That's why I'd  
 like to get the Thirteenth  
 Amendment through the House, and on

its way to ratification by the states, wrap the whole slavery thing up, forever and aye. As soon as I'm able. Now. End of this month. And I'd like you to stand behind me. Like my cabinet's most always done.

A moment's silence, broken by a sharp laugh from Seward.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

As the preacher said, I could write shorter sermons but once I start I get too lazy to stop.

JOHN USHER

It seems to me, sir, you're describing precisely the sort of dictator the Democrats have been howling about.

JAMES SPEED

Dictators aren't susceptible to law.

JOHN USHER

Neither is he! He just said as much! Ignoring the courts? Twisting meanings? What reins him in from, from...

LINCOLN

Well, the people do that, I suppose. I signed the Emancipation Proclamation a year and half before my second election. I felt I was within my power to do it; however I also felt that I might be wrong about that; I knew the people would tell me. I gave 'em a year and half to think about it. And they re-elected me.

(beat)

And come February the first, I intend to sign the Thirteenth Amendment.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Nicolay opens the door to the crowded outer office to admit perpetually worried JAMES ASHLEY, 42, (R, OH). Tad eyes him from a chair by the window.

Lincoln enters the room with Seward.

LINCOLN

Well, Mr. Representative Ashley!  
Tell us the news from the Hill.

Lincoln shakes his hand and warmly claps the discombobulated but flattered representative on the shoulder.

JAMES ASHLEY

Well! Ah! News -

LINCOLN

Why for instance is this thus, and  
what is the reason for this  
thusness?

JAMES ASHLEY

I...

SEWARD

James, we want you to bring the  
anti-slavery amendment to the floor  
for debate -

JAMES ASHLEY

Excuse me. *What?*

SEWARD

- immediately, and - You are  
the amendment's manager, are  
you not?

JAMES ASHLEY

I am, of course - But -  
*Immediately?*

SEWARD

And we're counting on robust  
radical support, so tell Mr.  
Stevens we expect him to put his  
back into it, it's not going to be  
easy, but we trust -

JAMES ASHLEY

It's *impossible*. No, I am sorry,  
no, we can't organize anything  
*immediately* in the House. I have  
been canvassing the Democrats since  
the election, in case any of them  
softened after they got walloped.  
But they have stiffened if  
anything, Mr. Secretary. There  
aren't nearly enough votes -

LINCOLN

We're whalers, Mr. Ashley!

JAMES ASHLEY  
Whalers? As in, um, whales?

Lincoln moves in, standing very close to Ashley.

LINCOLN  
We've been chasing this whale for a long time. We've finally placed a harpoon in the monster's back. It's *in*, James, it's in! We finish the deed now, we can't wait! Or with one flop of his tail he'll smash the boat and send us all to eternity!

SEWARD  
On the 31st of this month. Of this year. Put the amendment up for a vote.

Ashley is agog.

INT. THADDEUS STEVENS'S OFFICE IN THE CAPITOL - EVENING

The room's redolent of politics, ideology (a bust of Robespierre, a print of Tom Paine), long occupancy and hard work. On the wall opposite a massive desk hangs a faded banner: "RE-ELECT THADDEUS STEVENS, REPUBLICAN TICKET, 9TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, LANCASTER PENNSYLVANIA". At the desk sits THADDEUS STEVENS (R, PA), 73, bald under a horrible red wig, a gaunt, powerful face resembling Lincoln's, though beardless and bitter.

In the office are Ashley, Speaker of the House SCHUYLER COLFAX (R, IN), formidable Senator BLUFF WADE (R, MA), who's never smiled, and ASA VINTNER LITTON (R, MD).

BLUFF WADE  
*Whalers?*

JAMES ASHLEY  
That's what he said.

BLUFF WADE  
The man's never been near a whale ship in his life!  
(to Stevens:)  
Withdraw radical support, force him to abandon this scheme, whatever he's up to - He drags his feet about everything, Lincoln; why this urgency? We got it through the Senate without difficulty because

we had the numbers. Come December you'll have the same in the House. The amendment'll be the easy work of ten minutes.

ASA VINTNER LITTON  
He's using the *threat* of the amendment to frighten the rebels into an immediate surrender.

SCHUYLER COLFAX  
I imagine we'd rejoice to see that.

ASA VINTNER LITTON  
Will you rejoice when the Southern states have re-joined the Union, pell-mell, as Lincoln intends them to, and one by one each refuses to ratify the amendment? *If* we pass it, which we won't.

(to Stevens:)

Why are we co-operating with, with *him*? We all know what he's doing and we all know what he'll do. We can't offer up abolition's best legal prayer to his games and tricks.

BLUFF WADE  
He's said he'd welcome the South back with all its slaves in chains.

JAMES ASHLEY  
Three years ago he said that! To calm the border states when we were-

THADDEUS STEVENS  
*I don't.*

This confuses the room. Stevens turns to Vintner Litton.

THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)  
You said "we all know what he'll do." *I don't know.*

ASA VINTNER LITTON  
You know he isn't to be trusted.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
*Trust?* I'm sorry, I was under the misapprehension your chosen profession was politics. I've never trusted the President. I never



trust anyone. But... Hasn't he surprised you?

ASA VINTNER LITTON  
No, Mr. Stevens, he hasn't.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
Nothing surprises you, Asa, therefore nothing about you is surprising. Perhaps that is why your constituents did not re-elect you to the coming term.  
(collecting his cane and standing:)  
It's late, I'm old, I'm going home.

Stevens limps to the door, opens it, and turns.

THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)  
Lincoln the inveterate dawdler, Lincoln the Southerner, Lincoln the capitulating compromiser, our adversary - and leader of the godforsaken Republican Party, *our* party - Abraham Lincoln has asked us to work with him to accomplish the death of slavery in America.  
(beat:)  
Retain, even in opposition, your capacity for astonishment.

Stevens leaves, shutting the door. They watch him go, Ashley excited, Litton unmoved, insulted, skeptical.

INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM, OLD TAVERN IN WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT

In a cramped private alcove, a low, sagging timber ceiling, sooty walls, sawdusted floor, ancient curtain closing it off, Seward sits at a small table with ROBERT LATHAM, an Albany NY political operative, RICHARD SCHELL, a Wall Street speculator, and W.N. BILBO, a Tennessee lawyer and lobbyist. A chandelier with candles drips wax on them.

On the table, a leather folio lies open: prospectuses for jobs in the administration. Latham and Schell study these. Bilbo is studying Seward.

SEWARD  
The President is never to be mentioned. Nor I. You're paid for your discretion.

W.N. BILBO

Hell, you can have that for nothin', what we need money for is bribes. It'd speed things up.

SEWARD

No. Nothing strictly illegal.

ROBERT LATHAM

It's not illegal to bribe Congressmen. They starve otherwise.

RICHARD SCHELL

I have explained to Mr. Bilbo and Mr. Latham that we're offering patronage jobs to the Dems who vote yes. Jobs and nothing more.

SEWARD

That's correct.

W.N. BILBO

Congressmen come cheap! Few thousand bucks'll buy you all you need.

SEWARD

The President would be unhappy to hear you did that.

W.N. BILBO

Well, will he be unhappy if we lose?

A WAITRESS brings in a platter of roasted crabs, which she slams down on the table, and leaves.

SEWARD

The money I managed to raise for this endeavor is only for your fees, food, and lodgings.

W.N. BILBO

Uh huh. If that squirrel-infested attic you've quartered us in's any measure, you ain't raised much.

RICHARD SCHELL

Shall we get to work?

Bilbo takes a mallet to a crab, smashing it!

## INT. FLOOR OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - DAY

A gavel slams down on a sounding block in an attempt to silence the raucous tumult in the large chamber. It subsides enough for Colfax to be heard from his chair atop the central dais:

SCHUYLER COLFAX

The House recognizes Fernando Wood,  
the honorable representative from  
New York.

## TITLE: THE HOUSE DEBATE BEGINS

JANUARY 9

Floor and balcony are full, although the desks of representatives from seceded states are bare and unoccupied.

On the Democratic side, 81 members applaud FERNANDO WOOD (D, NY) as he takes the podium. The Democratic leadership, including GEORGE YEAMAN (KY), has gathered around House minority leader GEORGE PENDLETON(OH). On the Republican side of the aisle, enraged booing from the 102 Republicans, including HIRAM PRICE (IA), GEORGE JULIAN (IN), Vintner Litton and Ashley, all gathered around Stevens's desk.

FERNANDO WOOD

Estimable colleagues. Two bloody  
years ago this month, his Highness,  
King Abraham Africanus the First -  
our Great Usurping Caesar, violator  
of habeas corpus and freedom of the  
press, abuser of states' rights -

HIRAM PRICE

(loud:)  
If Lincoln really were a  
tyrant, Mr. Wood, he'd'a had  
your empty head impaled on a  
pike, and the country better  
for it!

FERNANDO WOOD

- radical republican autocrat  
ruling by fiat and martial  
law affixed his name to his  
heinous and illicit  
Emancipation Proclamation,  
promising it would hasten the  
end of the war, which yet  
rages on and on.

Murmuring from the floor and the balcony, in the front row of which Mary and Elizabeth Keckley sit. Mary turns her gaze from the floor to watch Latham and Schell, a few seats away, scrutinize the floor, whispering, Latham taking notes. Schell holds the leather prospectus folio in his lap. Bilbo sits behind them.

They study the other NY Democrats - CHARLES HANSON, NELSON MERRICK, HENRY LANFORD, HOMER BENSON, GILES STUART - who

comprise a cluster of glum uncomfortable passivity on that side of the aisle.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
He claimed, as tyrants do,  
that the war's emergencies  
permitted him to turn our  
army into the unwilling  
instrument of his monarchical  
ambitions -

ROBERT LATHAM  
(whispering to Schell:)  
The New York delegation's  
looking decidedly uninspired.

Wood points at Stevens, granite-faced. Stevens's eyes burn back at Wood.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
- and radical Republicanism's  
abolitionist fanaticism!

This prompts shouts and boos from the Republicans.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
His Emancipation Proclamation has  
obliterated millions of dollars'  
worth of personal property rights -

Schell examines the Pennsylvania Democrats: an openly appalled ARCHIBALD MORAN, AMBROSE BAILER, and, chewing his thumb, a painful fake grin pinned to his face, ALEXANDER COFFROTH. Schell leans in to Latham.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
- and "liberated" the  
hundreds of thousands of  
hopelessly indolent Negro  
refugees, bred by nature for  
servility, to settle in  
squalor in our Northern  
cities!

RICHARD SCHELL  
Over in Pennsylvania - who's  
the sweaty man eating his  
thumb?

ROBERT LATHAM  
Unknown to me. Seems jumpy.

RICHARD SCHELL  
Perhaps he'll jump.

Cheering and booing.

In the Connecticut delegation, JOHN ELLIS winds his pocket watch, looking contemptuously at Wood. Schell makes a note.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
 But all that was not enough  
 for this dictator, who now  
 seeks to insinuate his  
 miscegenist pollution into  
 the Constitution itself!

W.N. BILBO  
 Jesus, when's this son-of-  
 liberty sonofabitch gonna sit  
 down?

RICHARD SCHELL  
 John Ellis is going to break  
 his watch if he doesn't stop -

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
 We are once again asked - nay,  
 commanded - to consider a proposed  
 thirteenth amendment which, if  
 passed, shall set at immediate  
 liberty four million coloreds while  
 manacling the limbs of the white  
 race in America. *If it is passed -  
 but it shall not pass!*

Wild cheering and booing.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
 Every member of the House  
 loyal to the Democratic Party  
 and the constituents it  
 serves shall oppose-

ROBERT LATHAM  
 What's more interesting is  
 how dismal and disgruntled  
 Mr. Yeaman appears. He should  
 be cheering right now, but...

W.N. BILBO  
 Looks like he ate a bad  
 oyster.

Thaddeus Stevens calls out from his desk.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 A point of order, Mr. Speaker, if  
 you please? When will Mr. Wood -

FERNANDO WOOD  
 Mr. Speaker, I still have the floor  
 and the gentleman from Pennsylvania  
 is out of order!

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 - when will Mr. Wood conclude his  
 interminable gabble? Some of us  
 breathe oxygen, and we find the  
 mephitic fumes of his oratory a  
 lethal challenge to our pleural  
 capacities.

Wild cheering, applause from the Republicans.

FERNANDO WOOD

We shall oppose this amendment, and  
any legislation that so affronts  
natural law, insulting to God as to  
man! Congress must never declare  
equal those whom God created  
unequal!

The Democrats cheer. Mary watches with concern. Mrs. Keckley is angry and uncomfortable.

THADDEUS STEVENS

Slavery is the only insult to  
natural law, you fatuous  
nincompoop!

GEORGE PENDLETON

Order! Procedure! Mr. Speaker, Mr.  
Wood has the floor!

(to Stevens:)

Instruct us, Oh Great Commoner,  
what is unnatural, in your opinion?  
Niggrahs casting ballots? Niggrah  
representatives? Is that natural,  
Stevens? Intermarriage?

THADDEUS STEVENS

What violates natural law? Slavery,  
and *you, Pendleton*, you insult God,  
you unnatural noise.

An avalanche of boos and cheers as Democrats surge towards Wood, Republicans towards Stevens. Ashley rushes to Colfax, calling:

JAMES ASHLEY

Mr. Colfax! Please, use your gavel!  
They are -

(to the Democrats:)

You are out of order!

(to Colfax:)

Direct the sergeant of arms to  
suppress this!

(back to the Democrats:)

We are in session!

INT. SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

The corridor as usual is lined with petitioners. They've lined up along both sides of the wall and are hooting, laughing, clapping and cheering, egging on Tad as, with furious concentration, he drives a cart pulled at considerable speed by a large and seriously annoyed goat down

the hall. White House doorkeeper and unofficial child-minder TOM PENDEL follows, admonishing the petitioners as he goes.

TOM PENDEL

Please don't encourage this! Don't encourage this!

ROBERT LINCOLN, 21, enters from the stairs carrying several pieces of large and heavy luggage.

Tad sees him, jumps out of the goat cart, runs up to and tackles Robert, causing him to drop his luggage. They embrace as Pendel captures the goat and leads it away.

TAD

You're back you're back you're back  
you're back you're -

ROBERT

(laughing)

I am. Your goat got big.

Robert disentangles himself from Tad and hands him a suitcase.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Here, help me get one of these to  
my room.

(a nervous glance at the  
door to Mary's bedroom  
suite:)

Is she in there?

As Robert hoists the rest of the luggage himself, Tad chatters and A PETITIONER comes forward. He grabs the trunk as Robert's lifting it.

TAD  
 She's asleep, probably, they went to see Avonia Jones last night in a play about Israelites. Daddy's meeting with a famous scientist now and he's nervous because of how smart the man is and the man is angry about, 'cause there's a new book that Sam Beckwith says is about finches, and finches' beaks, about how they change, it takes years and years and years but -

PETITIONER  
 You need help, sir? I can...

ROBERT  
 No, sir, I don't. No.

PETITIONER  
 Could you bring your pa this letter I writ about my insolvency proceedings?

ROBERT  
 Let it go please, thank you. You deliver your own goddamned petition, thank you...

PETITIONER  
 Please, please.

Robert wrestles the trunk out of the man's grasp just as Mary enters the hall and sees him.

MARY  
 He's here...  
 (calling down the hall:)  
 He's here, Mrs. Cuthbert! He's here!  
 (to Robert:)  
 Robbie... Oh Robbie! Robbie!

ROBERT  
 (embracing her:)  
 Hi, mama. Hey. Hey...

MARY (CONT'D)  
 (overjoyed)  
 Oh!

She instantly eyes Robert's amount of luggage with suspicion.

MARY (CONT'D)  
 You're only staying a few days. Why'd you pack all of that?

ROBERT  
 Well, I don't know how long I'm -

TAD  
 - but what's made everyone really cross with the man, the man who wrote the finch book, is he says people are cousins to monkeys, but he was going to say -

MARY (CONT'D)  
 (to Tad:)  
 Go tell your father Robert's home!



TAD

Mr. Nicolay says daddy's secluded  
with Mr. Blair.

MARY

Tell him anyway.

Tad drops the suitcase and runs to the office. Mary strokes  
Robert's face, looking concerned.

MARY (CONT'D)

You forget to eat, exactly like  
him.

ROBERT

(laughs)

No...

MARY

You'll linger a few days extra,  
after the reception, before you go  
back to school.

ROBERT

Well, I don't know if I'm gonna go  
back to -

She stops him with an alarmed look.

MARY

We'll fatten you up before you  
return to Boston.

ROBERT

All right, mama.

MARY

All right.  
(beaming at him,  
adoringly:)  
Oh Robbie...

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

Preston Blair, still in his traveling cloak, and Lincoln  
stand near the fireplace facing one another.

PRESTON BLAIR

Jefferson Davis is sending three  
delegates: Stephens, Hunter and  
Campbell: Vice President of the  
Confederacy, their former Secretary  
of State, and their Assistant

Secretary of War. They're coming in earnest to propose peace.

Both men look into the fire. Preston moves closer.

PRESTON BLAIR (CONT'D)

I know this is unwelcome news for you. Now hear me: I went to Richmond to talk to *traitors*, to smile at and plead with *traitors*, because it'll be spring in two months, the roads'll be passable, the Spring slaughter commences. Four bloody Springs now! Think of my Frank, who you've taken to your heart, how you'll blame yourself if the war takes my son as it's taken multitudes of sons. Think of all the boys who'll die if you don't make peace. You must talk with these men!

LINCOLN

I intend to, Preston. And in return, I must ask you -

PRESTON BLAIR

No, this is *not* horsetrading, this is life and -

LINCOLN

- to support our push for the amendment when it reaches the -

There's a knock on the door.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Not now!

Robert enters. Nicolay stands behind him, apologetic.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Oh. Bob. I'm sorry. Welcome home.

He shakes hands with his son, stiffly.

ROBERT

Thank you.

LINCOLN

(to Robert:)  
I'm talking to Preston Blair, we -

PRESTON BLAIR

(pointedly:)  
You're looking fit, Robert. Harvard agrees with you. Fit and rested.

ROBERT

Mr. Blair.

LINCOLN  
(dismissing Robert,  
unintentionally abrupt)  
Just give us a moment please,  
Robert. Thank you.

He turns to Preston. Robert, stung, hesitates, then leaves the room, Nicolay shutting the door behind him.

PRESTON BLAIR  
I will procure your votes for you,  
as I promised. You've always kept  
your word to me. Those Southern men  
are coming.  
(taking Lincoln's hand)  
I beg you, in the name of Gentle  
Christ -

PRESTON BLAIR (CONT'D)  
*Talk peace with these men.*

LINCOLN  
Preston, I understand...

LINCOLN  
(sharply)  
I understand, Preston.

EXT. ON THE MALL - AFTERNOON

JACOB GRAYLOR (D, PA) and Bilbo walk outside the Capitol.  
Graylor looks over the prospectuses.

ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)  
We have one abstention so far -

RICHARD SCHELL (V.O.)  
Jacob Graylor -

Graylor selects one and hands it to Bilbo.

RICHARD SCHELL (V.O.)  
He'd like to be Federal Revenue  
Assessor for the Fifth District of  
Pennsylvania.

INT. A BEDROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT

A small room, two beds, in disarray: newspapers, overflowing ashtrays, whiskey bottles empty on the floor. Latham and Schell stand at a table strewn with the remnants of a poker game. Bilbo lies on one of the beds. All three are in their shirtsleeves. Seward is at the table.

ROBERT LATHAM

- so the total of representatives voting three weeks from today is reduced to 182, which means 122 yes votes to reach the requisite two-thirds of the House. Assuming all Republicans vote for the amendment...?

Seward nods, less assertively than Latham would like.

ROBERT LATHAM (CONT'D)

Then, despite our abstention, to reach a two-thirds majority we remain 20 yeses short.

INT. THE OLD TAVERN, WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Bilbo is drinking schooners of beer with EDWIN LECLERK (D, OH) and CLAY HAWKINS (D, OH). Hawkins listens as Bilbo gives his pitch. LeClerk looks at the prospectuses.

ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)

For which we're seeking from among 64 lame duck Democrats. Fully 39 of these we deem unredeemable no votes.

LeClerk throws his beer in Bilbo's face, soaking Bilbo and the prospectuses. Hawkins looks shocked. LeClerk storms out.

INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT

W.N. BILBO

The kind that hates niggers, hates God for making niggers.

ROBERT LATHAM

The Good Lord on High would despair of their souls.

SEWARD

(distastefully:)

Thank you for that pithy explanation, Mr. Bilbo.

RICHARD SCHELL

We've abandoned these 39 to the Devil that possesses them.

EXT. A WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD IN WASHINGTON - DAY

Schell stands at the door of a small, grubby row house. He presents the folio, warped from its beer bath, to WILLIAM HUTTON(D, IN), eyes red from crying, dressed in mourning black.

Hutton slams the door in Schell's face. A funeral wreath that adorns the door falls to the ground. A daguerreotype attached to the wreath depicts a young officer, Hutton's brother Frederick.

INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT

RICHARD SCHELL

The remaining lame ducks, on whom  
we've been working with a purpose -

Schell hands Latham a stack of folded prospectuses, each with a name scrawled on it.

ROBERT LATHAM

Charles Hanson.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CAPITOL - TWILIGHT

Representatives Merrick, Lanford, Benson, Stuart and Hanson, the New York lame ducks, descend the stairs, discussing the opening of the amendment debate, to which they've just been listening.

Latham smoothly holds Hanson back from the group, extending a hand, the still pristine portfolio under his arm. He smiles as the other NY lame ducks proceed down the stairs, unaware, then nods his head back up toward the Capitol steps, where Bilbo and Schell wait. Latham opens the folio as he talks to Hanson.

INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT

ROBERT LATHAM

Giles Stuart.

INT. THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT - DAY

In the grand lobby there are Federal bank windows. Schell is in line at one of these behind Giles Stuart, who completes a transaction and leaves, counting money. Bilbo, barrelling the other way, intentionally slams into Stuart, causing him to drop his money. Bilbo and Schell both kneel to help.

Schell places the open folio in Stuart's hands. As the men pile his recovered money into the folio, Stuart's puzzled, then intrigued. Schell gives him a meaningful look.

CLOSE ON A SMALL WOODEN FILE BOX

A folded prospectus, now with the name "Stuart" scrawled on it, is added to a growing file.

INT. THE US PATENT OFFICE, WASHINGTON - DAY

Visitors file past cabinets containing animal and plant specimens and inventions; the line circles around a large case in which an amputated leg capped with a brass plate is displayed. A sign identifies it: LEFT LEG OF GENERAL DANIEL SICKLES, AT GETTYSBURG, JULY 5, 1863.

ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)  
Nelson Merrick.

Latham looks through the case at Schell, who's next to Nelson Merrick, who nods, solemnly staring at the leg. Schell proffers Merrick the folio. Merrick flips through the folio.

ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)  
Homer Benson.

INT. A WORKINGMENS' LUNCHROOM, WASHINGTON - DAY

A hall packed with working men, soaped-up windows. A GYPSY FIDDLER saws away. Homer Benson, incongruous in a suit, slurps. As he lifts his spoon to his mouth, the folio is placed in front of him. He looks over, puzzled, as Schell smiles and extends a hand.

Benson takes the folio. Schell slides his chair closer.

INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT

Another prospectus joins the pile: "Benson"

ROBERT LATHAM  
And lastly...

Bilbo retrieves a paper from the floor and hands it to Seward.

W.N. BILBO  
Clay Hawkins. Of Ohio.

EXT. A WOODS ALONG THE POTOMAC RIVER - MORNING

Bilbo walks with Clay Hawkins, who peruses the folio. Bilbo has a small covered wicker basket slung over his shoulder. Hawkins follows, happy and sick with fear.

CLAY HAWKINS

T-tax collector for the Western Reserve. Th-th-that pays handsomely.

W.N. BILBO

Don't just reach for the highest branches. They sway in every breeze. Assistant Port Inspector of Marlston looks like the ticket to me.

CLAY HAWKINS

Uh, boats, they, they make me sick.

Bilbo retrieves a snare; a small bird is trapped by the foot. Bilbo stuffs the bird in the basket.

CLAY HAWKINS (CONT'D)

So just stand on the dock. Let the Assistant *Assistant* Port Inspector's stomach go weak.

Bilbo eyes Hawkins, who anxiously eyes the folio.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Seward hands the last prospectus to Nicolay, who unfolds it, places it on top of the other prospectuses, and records details about Hawkins's appointment in a notebook. Seward smokes a cigar, Nicolay a pipe. Lincoln sits, feet up, examining a newspaper.

SEWARD

And lastly, Democratic yes vote number six. Hawkins from Ohio.

LINCOLN

Six.

SEWARD

Well, thus far. Plus Graylor's abstention. From tiny acorns and so on.

LINCOLN

What'd Hawkins get?

JOHN NICOLAY  
 (still writing:)  
 Postmaster of the Millersburg Post  
 Office.

LINCOLN  
 He's selling himself cheap, ain't  
 he?

SEWARD  
 He wanted tax collector of the  
 Western Reserve - a first-term  
 congressman who couldn't manage re-  
 election, I felt it unseemly and  
 they bargained him down to  
 Postmaster.

(to Nicolay:)  
 Scatter 'em over several rounds of  
 appointments, so no one notices.  
 And burn this ledger, please, after  
 you're done.

Lincoln stands.

LINCOLN  
 (to Nicolay:)  
 Time for my public opinion bath.  
 Might as well let 'em in.

Nicolay helps Lincoln trade his shawl for his overcoat in  
 preparation to meet the public.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)  
 Seven yeses with Mr. Ellis!  
 Thirteen to go!

SEWARD  
 One last item, an absurdity, but -  
 My associates report that among the  
 Representatives a fantastical  
 rumor's bruited about, which I  
 immediately disavowed, that you'd  
 allowed bleary old Preston Blair to  
 sojourn to Richmond to invite Jeff  
 Davis to send commissioners up to  
 Washington with a peace plan.

Lincoln is silent. A horrifying reality dawns for Seward:

SEWARD (CONT'D)  
 I, of course, told them you would  
 never...Not without consulting me,  
 you wouldn't...Because why on earth  
 would you?



EXT. IN AN OPEN FIELD NEAR PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA - EVENING

THREE UNION CAVALRY OFFICERS consult with THREE CONFEDERATE CAVALRY OFFICERS, all mounted. The officers exchange documents and salutes.

TITLE: **NO MAN'S LAND**

**OUTSIDE PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA**

**JANUARY 11**

The ranking Confederate trots to a buggy in which three Confederate officials sit: Vice President ALEXANDER STEPHENS, 53, short; JOHN A. CAMPBELL, Assistant Secretary of War, 54; and Senator R.M.T. HUNTER, 56. They're well-dressed for winter, Stephens especially heavily bundled.

Stephens, Campbell and the indignant Hunter leave the buggy and are escorted by Confederate officers to the waiting company of Union cavalry and infantry.

A Union Army ambulance, a large American flag painted on one side, driven by TWO BLACK SOLDIERS, stands near broken wagons and a derelict cannon. ANOTHER BLACK SOLDIER stands at attention by the ambulance's rear door.

The soldier, staring coldly at these men, gestures brusquely to the ambulance. The Confederate peace commissioners hesitate; Hunter stares in horror at the black soldiers. Then Stephens pushes past Hunter. He nods to the soldier.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS  
(with polite dignity:)  
Much obliged.

He boards the ambulance. His fellow delegates follow in his wake, Hunter glaring with defiant hatred at the soldiers before climbing in.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Seward stands, stunned. Lincoln sits at the cabinet table. Nicolay is gone.

SEWARD  
Why wasn't I consulted?! I'm  
Secretary of State! You, you, you  
informally send a reactionary  
dottard, to - What will happen, do  
you imagine, when these peace  
commissioners arrive?

LINCOLN

We'll hear 'em out.

SEWARD

Oh, splendid! And next the Democrats will invite 'em up to hearings on the Hill, and the newspapers - well, the *newspapers* - the newspapers will ask "why risk enraging the Confederacy over the issue of slavery when they're here to make peace?" We'll lose every Democrat we've got, more than likely conservative Republicans will join 'em, and all our work, all our preparing the ground for the vote, laid waste, for naught.

LINCOLN

The Blairs have promised support for the amendment if we listen to these people -

SEWARD

Oh, the Blairs promise, do they? You think they'll keep their promise once we have heard these delegates and refused them? Which we will have to do, since their proposal most certainly will be predicated on *keeping their slaves!*

LINCOLN

What hope for any Democratic votes, Willum, if word gets out that I've refused a chance to end the war? You think word won't get out? In Washington?

SEWARD

It's either the amendment or this Confederate peace, you cannot have both.

LINCOLN

"If you can look into the seeds of time, And say which grain will grow and which will not, Speak then to me..."

SEWARD

Oh, disaster. This is a disaster!

LINCOLN

Time is a great thickener of things, Willum.

SEWARD

Yes, I suppose it is - Actually I have no idea what you mean by that.

Lincoln stands.

LINCOLN

Get me thirteen votes.  
(in a thick Kentucky accent:)  
Them fellers from Richmond ain't here yit.

INT. INSIDE THE AMBULANCE WAGON - DAY

The ambulance has come to a stop. The rear door opens and the soldiers immediately hop out. The commissioners squint, blinded, into the dazzling sunlight, at the River Queen, Grant's side-wheel steamer, docked on the banks of the James River.

**TITLE: US ARMY HEADQUARTERS**

**CITY POINT, VIRGINIA**

**JANUARY 12**

INT. LINCOLN'S BEDROOM, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Tad, in fancy military uniform, sits on the bed, Gardener's box of glass negatives open beside him. He holds up a plate to a lamp:

An old black man with a thick beard and hair, shirtless.

Tad looks at another plate:

A young black woman, headscarf, huge ugly scar across her cheek and down her neck.

He studies these with solemn concentration.

ROBERT (O.C.)

You drafted half the men in Boston!  
What do you think their families think about me?

Lincoln is being dressed in formal wear by his valet, WILLIAM SLADE, a light-skinned black man in his 40s. Robert, already in his morning suit, is standing by the door.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

The only reason they don't throw things and spit on me is 'cause you're so popular. I can't concentrate on, on British mercantile law, I don't care about British mercantile law. I might not even want to be a lawyer -

LINCOLN

It's a sturdy profession, and a useful one.

ROBERT

Yes, and I want to be useful, but now, not afterwards!

Slade hands Lincoln his formal gloves.

LINCOLN

I ain't wearing them things, Mr. Slade, they never fit right.

WILLIAM SLADE

The missus will have you wear 'em. Don't think about leaving 'em.

ROBERT

You're delaying, that's your favorite tactic.

WILLIAM SLADE

(to Robert:)  
Be useful and stop  
distracting him.

ROBERT

You won't tell me no, but the war will be over in a month, and you know it will!

LINCOLN

(to Robert:)  
I've found that prophesying is one of life's less prophet-able occupations!

He accepts the gloves. Slade laughs a little, Robert scowls. Tad holds another glass negative up to the light.

TAD

Why do some slaves cost more than others?

ROBERT

If they're still young and healthy,  
if the women can still conceive,  
they'll pay more -

LINCOLN

Put 'em back in the box. We'll  
return them to Mr. Gardner's studio  
day after next. Be careful with  
'em, now.

(tugging at his gloves:)

These things should've stayed on  
the calf.

TAD

(to Slade, putting the  
plates away:)

When you were a slave, Mr. Slade,  
did they beat you?

WILLIAM SLADE

I was born a free man. Nobody beat  
me except I beat them right back.

There's a knock on the door and Mrs. Keckley enters.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

Mr. Lincoln, could you come with me-

WILLIAM SLADE

(to Tad:)

Mrs. Keckley was a slave. Ask her  
if she was beaten.

TAD

Were you -

LINCOLN

(shakes his head)  
*Tad.*

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

(to Tad:)

I was beaten with a fire shovel  
when I was younger than you.

(to Lincoln:)

You should go to Mrs. Lincoln.  
She's in Willie's room.

ROBERT

She never goes in there.

Lincoln starts towards the door just as John Hay enters,  
dressed in the uniform of a Brevet Colonel.

JOHN HAY

The reception line is already  
stretching out the door.

Robert shoots an angry, envious glance at Hay's uniform as Lincoln, Slade, Mrs. Keckley and Hay leave. Robert calls to his father:

ROBERT

I'll be the only man over fifteen  
and under sixty-five in this whole  
place not in uniform.

TAD

I'm under fifteen and I have a  
uniform.

Robert storms out.

INT. THE PRINCE OF WALES BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lincoln enters a dark room, its heavy drapes closed against the dim afternoon light. There are two beds. One is stripped bare. The other is canopied with a thick black veil.

Mary, dressed in a deep purple gown with black flowers and beading, perfectly pitched between mourning and emergence, is seated at the head of the canopied bed. On a nightstand next to the bed there's a toy locomotive engine, a tattered book of B&O railroad schedules.

Mary holds a framed photograph: an image of WILLIE, 12, handsome, bright-eyed, confident.

Lincoln crosses to the window.

MARY

My head hurts so.

(beat)

I prayed for death the night Willie  
died. The headaches are how I know  
I didn't get my wish. How to endure  
the long afternoon and deep into  
the night.

LINCOLN

I know.

MARY

Trying not to think about him. How  
will I manage?

LINCOLN

Somehow you will.

MARY

(sad smile:)

Somehow. Somehow. Somehow... Every party, every... And now, four years more in this terrible house reproaching us. He was a very sick little boy. We should've cancelled that reception, shouldn't we?

LINCOLN

We didn't know how sick he was.

MARY

I knew, I *knew*, I saw that night he was dying.

LINCOLN

Three years ago, the war was going so badly, and we had to put on a face.

MARY

But I saw Willie was dying. I saw him -

He bends and kisses her hand.

LINCOLN

Molly. It's too hard. Too hard.

Mary stares up at him, her face heavy and swollen with grief.

INT. THE EAST ROOM, WHITE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Mary, radiant, her charm turned to its brightest candlepower, is greeting the Blairs, who are part of a long receiving line. The Blairs proceed from Mary to Lincoln.

**TITLE: GRAND RECEPTION**

**JANUARY 15**

The enormous room is splendid, decked with garlands of flowers, tall candelabra burning, flags from Army divisions. An orchestra plays.

Lincoln and Tad stand together. Slade is near Lincoln. Mary's a distance away from Lincoln, to his right.

Robert takes his place next to his mother, as conspicuous as he'd feared he'd be in his civilian clothes.

A sea of people surround the President and his family. Nicolay, Hay and several clerks channel the crowd waiting to greet the Lincolns into the line: wealthy people, many more middle-class people, some working people and farmers, and many officers and soldiers.

Tad watches his father shake hands. Lincoln is in his element. He stands close to each person, touches each one gently, stoops to be nearer them; he puts everyone at ease.

He's bothered only by the white kid gloves he's wearing. He tugs at the right-hand glove.

WILLIAM SLADE  
(with a glance in Mary's)  
She's just ten feet yonder. I'd  
like to keep my job.

Lincoln takes off the right-hand glove - his hand-shaking hand - but keeps the other glove on.

Approaching Mary on the line, Stevens, Ashley, Senators Bluff Wade and CHARLES SUMNER, all in formal wear except Stevens.

MARY  
Senator Sumner, it has been much  
too long.

CHARLES SUMNER  
"Oh, who can look on that celestial  
face and -"

Cutting him off, she pretends not to recognize Ashley.

MARY  
And...?

JAMES ASHLEY  
(confused)  
James Ashley, ma'am, we've met  
several times -

But she ignores him and greets Stevens.

MARY  
(her Southern accent  
becoming more lustrous:)  
Praise Heavens, praise Heavens,  
just when I had abandoned hope of  
amusement, it's the Chairman of the  
House Ways and Means Committee!

Stevens bows to her.



THADDEUS STEVENS

Mrs. Lincoln.

MARY

Madame President if you please!

(laughs)

Oh, don't convene another  
subcommittee to investigate me,  
sir! I'm teasing! Smile, Senator  
Wade.

BLUFF WADE

(Not smiling:)

I believe I am smiling, Mrs.  
Lincoln.

MARY

I'll take your word for that, sir!

THADDEUS STEVENS

As long as your household accounts  
are in order, Madame, we'll have no  
need to investigate them.

MARY

You have always taken such a  
lively, even prosecutorial interest  
in my household accounts.

THADDEUS STEVENS

Your household accounts have always  
been so interesting.

MARY

Yes, thank you, it's true, the  
miracles I have wrought out of  
fertilizer bills and cutlery  
invoices. But I had to! Four years  
ago, when the President and I  
arrived, this was pure pigsty.  
Tobacco stains in the turkey  
carpets. Mushrooms, green as the  
moon, sprouting from ceilings! And  
a pauper's pittance allotted for  
improvements. As if your committee  
joined with all of Washington  
awaiting, in what you anticipated  
would be our comfort in squalor,  
further proof that my husband and I  
were prairie primitives, unsuited  
to the position to which an error  
of the people, a flaw in the  
democratic process, had elevated  
us.

Lincoln, suddenly without anyone in line to receive, looks to see the backlog forming behind the radicals. He notes the exchange, but says nothing. Robert sees him looking.

MARY (CONT'D)

The past is the past, it's a new year now and we are all getting along, or so they tell me. I gather we are working together! The White House and the other House? Hatching little plans together?

Robert leans in to her.

ROBERT

Mother?

MARY

What?

ROBERT

You're creating a bottleneck.

MARY

Oh!

(to Stevens:)

Oh, I'm detaining you, and more important, the people behind you! How the people love my husband, they flock to see him, by their thousands on public days! They will never love you the way they love him. How difficult it must be for you to know that. And yet how important to remember it.

She gives him a slight, lethal smile. He holds the look; his poker-face yields to a barely perceptible smile, amused and perhaps a little admiring.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

The kitchen's piled with unwashed cookware, eggshells, flour bins, muffin and pastry molds, spoons and knives, the detritus of the preparations for the finger food served at the reception, which has now transitioned into a dance and is still underway upstairs. Music, the tramp of dancing feet and rhythmic clapping is audible.

A BLACK FOOTMAN carrying a huge tray laden with dishes and cups comes down the stairs. He hastily beats a retreat when he sees Lincoln and Thaddeus Stevens quietly talking amid the mess.

LINCOLN

Since we have the floor next in the debate, I thought I'd suggest you might...temper your contributions so as not to frighten our conservative friends?

THADDEUS STEVENS

Ashley insists you're ensuring approval by dispensing patronage to otherwise undeserving Democrats.

LINCOLN

I can't ensure a single damn thing if you scare the whole House with talk of land appropriations and revolutionary tribunals and punitive thisses and thats -

THADDEUS STEVENS

When the war ends, I intend to push for full equality, the Negro vote and much more. Congress shall mandate the seizure of every foot of rebel land and every dollar of their property. We'll use their confiscated wealth to establish hundreds of thousands of free Negro farmers, and at their side soldiers armed to occupy and transform the heritage of traitors. We'll build up a land down there of free men and free women and free children and freedom. The nation needs to know that we have such plans.

LINCOLN

That's the untempered version of reconstruction. It's not... It's not *exactly* what I intend, but we shall oppose one another in the course of time. Now we're working together, and I'm asking you -

THADDEUS STEVENS

For patience, I expect.

LINCOLN

When the people disagree, bringing them together requires going slow till they're ready to make up -

THADDEUS STEVENS

Ah, shit on the people and what they want and what they're ready for! I don't give a goddamn about the people and what they want! This is the face of someone who has fought long and hard for the good of the people without caring much for any of 'em. And I look a lot worse without the wig. The people elected me! To represent them! To lead them! And I lead! You ought to try it!

LINCOLN

I admire your zeal, Mr. Stevens, and I have tried to profit from the example of it. But if I'd listened to you, I'd've declared every slave free the minute the first shell struck Fort Sumter; then the border states would've gone over to the confederacy, the war would've been lost and the Union along with it, and instead of abolishing slavery, as we hope to do, in two weeks, we'd be watching helpless as infants as it spread from the American South into South America.

Stevens glares at him, then smiles.

THADDEUS STEVENS

Oh, how you have longed to say that to me. You claim you trust them - but you know what the people are. You know that the inner compass that should direct the soul toward justice has ossified in white men and women, north and south, unto utter uselessness through tolerating the evil of slavery. White people cannot bear the thought of sharing this country's infinite abundance with Negroes.

Lincoln reaches over to Stevens and gives his shoulder a vigorous shake. Stevens endures this.

LINCOLN

A compass, I learnt when I was surveying, it'll - it'll point you True North from where you're standing, but it's got no advice

about the swamps and deserts and  
chasms that you'll encounter along  
the way. If in pursuit of your  
destination you plunge ahead,  
heedless of obstacles, and achieve  
nothing more than to sink in a  
swamp, what's the use of knowing  
True North?

INT. MARY'S BOUDOIR, THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Spectacles on, Lincoln unlaces Mary's corset.

LINCOLN

Robert's going to plead with us to  
let him enlist.

He's unlaced enough; she unhooks the front and steps out of  
her corset and petticoats, turns to him in her plain thin  
chemise and drawers.

MARY

Make time to talk to Robbie. You  
only have time for Tad.

LINCOLN

Tad's young.

MARY

So's Robert. Too young for the  
army.

LINCOLN

Plenty of boys younger than Robert  
signing up...

MARY

Don't take Robbie. Don't let me  
lose my son.

There's a knock on the door. Mary turns to it, furious:

MARY (CONT'D)

Go away! We're occupied!

Lincoln opens the door. Nicolay's standing there.

JOHN NICOLAY

Secretary Stanton has sent over to  
tell you that as of half an hour  
ago, the shelling of Wilmington  
harbor has commenced.

Lincoln leaves with Nicolay. Mary watches, frozen, unable to let him go, knowing she can't stop him.

INT. THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE, WAR DEPARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

The telegraph office looks improvised, even after four years. Formerly the War Department library, it's lined with bookcases stuffed with bundled dispatches. Telegraph cables stretch across the ceiling to the cipher-operators' desks.

Stanton, perpetually exhausted and impatient, storms down the stairs with Welles and the chief telegraph operator, MAJOR THOMAS ECKERT, 40, in his wake.

STANTON

They cannot possibly maintain under this kind of an assault. Terry's got ten thousand men surrounding the Goddamned fort! Why doesn't he answer my cables?

WELLES

Fort Fisher is a mountain of a building, Edwin. Twenty-two big seacoast guns on each rampart -

MAJOR ECKERT

It's the largest fort they have, sir. They've been reinforcing it for the last two years -

They reach the desks for the key operators. Among these, SAMUEL BECKWITH, 25, and the key manager, DAVID HOMER BATES, 22, sit at their silent keys, waiting to receive news. Stanton scribbles furiously on Beckwith's small notepad.

STANTON (CONT'D)

They've taken 17,000 shells since yesterday!

WELLES

The commander is an old goat.

STANTON

I want to hear that Fort Fisher's ours and Wilmington has fallen!

MAJOR ECKERT

They said -

STANTON (CONT'D)

Send another damn cable!

Stanton thrusts the cable at Beckwith, who taps it out immediately.

Stanton turns to a table where the large map of Wilmington from the Cabinet meeting is laid out, heavily scribbled-on. GUSTAVUS FOX, assistant Secretary of the Navy, and CHARLES BENJAMIN, Stanton's clerk, are checking the marks on the map against a stack of dispatches.

STANTON (CONT'D)

The problem's their commander, Whiting. He engineered the fortress himself. The damned thing's his child; he'll defend it till his every last man is gone. He is not thinking rationally, he's -

LINCOLN (O.C.)

(hollering!)

"Come on out, you old rat!"

Everyone's startled, and confused. They all turn to Lincoln, who sits in Major Eckert's chair, wrapped in his shawl.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

That's what Ethan Allen called to the commander of Fort Ticonderoga in 1776. "Come on out, you old rat!" 'Course there were only forty-odd redcoats at Ticonderoga. But, but there is one Ethan Allen story that I'm very partial to -

STANTON

No! No, you're, you're going to tell a story! I don't believe that I can bear to listen to another one of your stories right now!

Stanton stalks out, shouting down the corridor as he goes:

STANTON (CONT'D)

I need the B&O sideyard schedules for Alexandria! I asked for them this morning!

Lincoln pays no attention to Stanton's fulminations and continues with his story.

LINCOLN

It was right after the Revolution, right after peace had been concluded, and Ethan Allen went to London to help our new country conduct its business with the king. The English sneered at how rough we are, and rude and simple-minded and on like that, everywhere he went, till one day he was invited to the townhouse of a great English lord. Dinner was served, beverages imbibed, time passed, as happens, and Mr. Allen found he needed the

privy. He was grateful to be directed thence - relieved you might say.

Everyone laughs.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Now, Mr. Allen discovered on entering the water closet that the only decoration therein was a portrait of George Washington. Ethan Allen done what he came to do and returned to the drawing room. His host and the others were disappointed when he didn't mention Washington's portrait. And finally His Lordship couldn't resist, and asked Mr. Allen had he noticed it, the picture of Washington. He had. Well, what did he think of its placement, did it seem appropriately located to Mr. Allen? Mr. Allen said it did. His host was astounded! Appropriate? George Washington's likeness in a water closet? Yes, said Mr. Allen, where it'll do good service: the whole world knows nothing'll make an Englishman shit quicker than the sight of George Washington.

Everyone laughs.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I love that story.

Beckwith's and Bates's keys starts clicking. They transcribe furiously.

There's a general rush to the operators' desks. Lincoln walks quickly over, and is joined there by Stanton, who arrives just as the first dispatch has been completed and is being decoded. Stanton and Lincoln hold hands, as they've done many times, waiting for news of the battle.

Bates hands the decoded cable to Benjamin, who reads it quickly, then announces to the room:

CHARLES BENJAMIN

Fort Fisher is ours. We've taken the port.

WELLES

And Wilmington?



Eckert shakes his head as Beckwith hands him the next telegram.

MAJOR ECKERT

We've taken the fort, but the city  
of Wilmington has not surrendered.

A beat as this sinks in. Then:

STANTON

How many casualties?

Eckert looks up at Stanton and Lincoln, stricken.

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

One representative's reading a paper with the headline: THE  
FALLEN AT WILMINGTON, followed by hundreds of names.

Pendleton and Wood are conferring.

FERNANDO WOOD

Heavy losses.

GEORGE PENDLETON

And more to come.

FERNANDO WOOD

Sours the national mood. That might  
suffice to discourage him -

GEORGE PENDLETON

To what? To bring this down? Not in  
a fight like this. This is to the  
death.

FERNANDO WOOD

It's gruesome!

GEORGE PENDLETON

(getting upset:)

Are you despairing, or merely lazy?  
This fight is for *The United States  
of America!* Nothing "suffices". A  
*rumor?* Nothing! *They're* not lazy!  
*They're* busily buying votes! While  
we hope to be saved by "the  
national mood?!"

He looks over at Stevens, who's at his desk consulting with  
Ashley and Julian.

GEORGE PENDLETON (CONT'D)

Before this blood is dry, when  
Stevens next takes the floor, taunt  
him - you excel at that - get him  
to proclaim what we all know he  
believes in his coal-colored heart:  
that this vote is meant to set the  
black race on high, to niggerate  
America.

FERNANDO WOOD

George, please. Stay on course.

GEORGE PENDLETON

Bring Stevens to full froth. I can  
ensure that every newspaperman from  
Louisville to San Francisco will be  
here to witness it and print it.

Colfax gavels the chamber to order, as George Yeaman  
approaches the podium.

SCHUYLER COLFAX

The floor belongs to the  
mellifluent gentleman from  
Kentucky, Mr. George Yeaman.

GEORGE YEAMAN

I thank you, Speaker Colfax.

The Democrats applaud as Yeaman takes his place at the podium  
and surveys the chamber.

GEORGE YEAMAN (CONT'D)

Although I'm disgusted by slavery  
I rise on this sad and solemn day  
to announce that I'm opposed to the  
amendment. We must consider what  
will become of colored folk if four  
million are in one instant set  
free.

Cheers and boos.

ASA VINTNER LITTON

They'll be free, George! That's  
what'll become of them! What'll  
become of any of us?! That's what  
being free means!

Schell, Latham, and Bilbo are perched in their usual gallery  
seats, taking notes.

RICHARD SCHELL  
Think how splendid if Mr. Yeaman  
switched.

ROBERT LATHAM  
(shaking his head:)  
Too publicly against us. He can't  
change course now.

W.N. BILBO  
Not for some miserable little job  
anyways.

GEORGE YEAMAN  
And, and! We will be forced to  
enfranchise the men of the colored  
race - it would be inhuman not to!  
Who among us is prepared to give  
Negroes the vote?

He's momentarily silenced by cheers and boos throughout the  
chamber.

GEORGE YEAMAN (CONT'D)  
And, and! What shall follow upon  
that? Universal enfranchisement?  
Votes for women?

Yeaman is stopped, baffled and dismayed by the explosion he's  
provoked.

INT. AN EMPTY COMMITTEE ROOM, THE CAPITOL - DAY

Hawkins enters and stops when he sees Pendleton and Wood.  
It's a trap. LeClerk follows, closing the door.

FERNANDO WOOD  
Bless my eyes, if it isn't the Post  
Master of Millersburg Ohio!

Hawkins looks at LeClerk, who guiltily avoids his glance.

GEORGE PENDLETON  
Mr. LeClerk felt honor-bound to  
inform us. Of your disgusting  
betrayal. Your prostitution.

FERNANDO WOOD  
Is that true, Postmaster Hawkins?  
Is your maidenly virtue for sale?

Hawkins sinks.

EXT. A WOODS ALONG THE POTOMAC RIVER - MORNING

Bilbo and Clay Hawkins are again in the woods. Bilbo, with his basket, clutches a pair of noisy snared partridges.

CLAY HAWKINS

My neighbors hear that I voted yes  
for nigger freedom and no to peace,  
they will kill me.

W.N. BILBO

A deal's a deal and you men know  
better than to piss your pants just  
cause there's talk about peace  
talks.

W.N. BILBO (CONT'D)

My neighbors in Nashville,  
they found out I was loyal to  
the Union, they came after me  
with gelding knives!

CLAY HAWKINS

Look, I'll find another job.

Hawkins runs away from Bilbo. Bilbo chases him.

CLAY HAWKINS

(to himself, as he  
runs:)  
Any other job.

W.N. BILBO

YOU DO RIGHT, CLAY HAWKINS!  
AND MAKE YOURSELF SOME MONEY  
IN THE BARGAIN -

CLAY HAWKINS

(turning back to Bilbo:)  
I want to do right! *But I got no  
courage!!!*

Hawkins runs away, sobbing. Bilbo pursues.

W.N. BILBO

Wait!! You wanted, what was it, tax  
man for the Western Reserve, hell  
you can have the whole state of  
Ohio if you -

Bilbo stops, winded.

W.N. BILBO (CONT'D)

Aw, crap.

EXT. IN A BACK ALLEY, SOMEWHERE IN WASHINGTON - AFTERNOON

Seward, smoking unhappily, strides toward his carriage, with Schell, Latham and Bilbo in pursuit.

SEWARD

*Eleven votes?! Two days ago we had twelve!! What happened?*

RICHARD SCHELL

It's the goddamned rumors regarding the Richmond delegation.

ROBERT LATHAM

There are defections in the ranks... Yes! The peace offer!

SEWARD

Groundless. I told you that.

ROBERT LATHAM

And yet the rumors persist.

RICHARD SCHELL

They are ruining us.

RICHARD SCHELL

Among the few remaining representatives who seem remotely plausible there is a perceptible increase in resistance.

Seward has reached the carriage, Bilbo alongside him. Before the Secretary of State can climb on board, Bilbo shuts the carriage door. Seward is outraged.

W.N. BILBO

Resistance, hell! Thingamabob Hollister, Dem from Indiana? I approached him, the sumbitch near to murdered me!

EXT. A STREET IN GEORGETOWN - NIGHT

Bilbo is talking to HAROLD HOLLISTER (D, IN), who pulls out a derringer. Bilbo bolts, dropping the folder. He stops, runs back, and bends to retrieve the folio as Hollister fires the gun over Bilbo's head.

EXT. IN A BACK ALLEY, SOMEWHERE IN WASHINGTON - AFTERNOON

Seward, now inside the carriage, slams the door.

SEWARD

Perhaps you push too hard.

W.N. BILBO

I push nobody. Perhaps we need reinforcements. If Jeff Davis wants to cease hostilities, who do you think'll give a genuine solid shit to free slaves?

SEWARD

Get back to it, and good day,  
gentlemen.

Schell and Latham lean in to the carriage.

RICHARD SCHELL

We are at an impasse.

ROBERT LATHAM

Tell Lincoln to deny the rumors.  
Publicly.

RICHARD SCHELL

Tell us what you expect of us.

SEWARD

I expect you to do your work! And  
to have sufficient sense and taste  
not to presume to instruct the  
President. Or me.

Schell steps up on the running board, intent.

RICHARD SCHELL

Is there a Confederate offer or  
not?

EXT. THE JAMES RIVER DOCK AT CITY POINT, VIRGINIA - DAY

ULYSSES S. GRANT, 43, 5'7", beard, uniform worn and rumpled,  
crosses the dock, followed by three aides.

They approach the gangway for the River Queen.

INT. THE RIVER QUEEN SALOON, CITY POINT, VIRGINIA - DAY

Grant and the commissioners stand in an expansive cabin at  
the stern, patriotically decorated, large windows.

Grant hands the commissioners' peace proposal back to them.  
He's scribbled notes all over the document.

GRANT

I suggest you work some changes to  
your proposal before you give it to  
the President.

R.M.T HUNTER

We're eager to be on our way to  
Washington.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

Did Mr. Lincoln tell you to tell us  
this, General Grant?

Grant fixes Stephens with a look - bemused, a little  
disappointed.

GRANT

It says... "securing peace for our  
two countries." And it goes on like  
that.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

I don't know what you -

GRANT

There's just one country. You and  
I, we're citizens of that country.  
I'm fighting to protect it from  
armed rebels. From you.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

But Mr. Blair told us, he, he told  
President Davis we were -

GRANT

A private citizen like Preston  
Blair can say what he pleases,  
since he has no authority over  
anything. If you want to discuss  
peace with President Lincoln,  
consider revisions.

He lights a cigar.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

If we're not to discuss a truce  
between warring nations, what in  
heaven's name can we discuss?

GRANT

Terms of surrender.

EXT. THE JAMES RIVER DOCK AT CITY POINT, VIRGINIA - DAY

As a somber Grant disembarks with his aides from the River  
Queen:

GRANT (V.O.)

"Office United States Military  
Telegraph, War Dept. For Abraham  
Lincoln, President of the United  
States. January 20, 1865. I will

state confidentially that I am convinced, upon conversation with these Commissioners, that their intentions are good and their desire sincere to restore peace and union. I fear now their going back, without any expression of interest..."

Seward's voice takes over from Grant's.

<p>GRANT (V.O.) (CONT'D)  "...from anyone in authority,  Mr. Lincoln..."</p>	<p>SEWARD (V.O.)  "...from anyone in authority,  Mr. Lincoln..."</p>
--	--

INT. SEWARD MANSION, LAFAYETTE SQUARE, WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Seward's in a fancy robe and slippers, reading a telegram.

SEWARD

"...will have a bad influence. I will be sorry should it prove impossible for you to have an interview with them. I am awaiting your instructions. U.S. Grant, Lieutenant General Commanding Armies United States"

Lincoln is in his coat, shawl over his shoulders, holding his hat.

LINCOLN

After four years of war and near 600,000 lives lost. He believes we can end this war now. My trust in him is marrow deep.

Seward looks up at Lincoln, then down again at the telegram. He stands and crosses to Lincoln.

SEWARD

You could bring the delegates to Washington. In exchange for the South's immediate surrender, we could promise them the amendment's defeat. They'd agree, don't you think? We'd end the war. This week.

Lincoln has closed his eyes.



SEWARD (CONT'D)

Or. If you could manage, without  
seeming to do it, to -

Lincoln shakes his head "no."

SEWARD (CONT'D)

The peace delegation might  
encounter delays as they travel up  
the James River. Particularly with  
the fighting around Wilmington.  
Within ten days time, we might pass  
the Thirteenth Amendment.

INT. HALLWAY, THE WHITE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Lincoln, shawl still wrapped around him, walks the long empty  
hall.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Lincoln sits before an open window. He's dishevelled, in  
shirtsleeves an unbuttoned vest, next to an inkwell, papers  
and books of law scattered about, and a lit candle in a  
candlestick, guttering. Grant's telegraph is in one hand, and  
in the other hand, his spectacles and, dangling from a chain,  
his open pocket watch. His bare left foot keeps time with the  
watch's loud ticking. He stares out into the cold night.

INT. JOHN HAY AND JOHN NICOLAY'S BEDROOM - EVEN LATER

The room is spare and neat. Nicolay and Hay are asleep in  
their beds.

Lincoln is sitting at the foot of Hay's bed, spectacles on,  
reading a petition, the others in his lap, pencil in hand.

LINCOLN

Now, here's a sixteen year old boy.  
They're going to hang him...

Hay startles awake, then settles. He's used to this.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

(he reads a little  
further:)

He was with the 15th Indiana  
Calvary near Beaufort, seems he  
lamed his horse to avoid battle.  
I don't think even Stanton would

complain if I pardoned him? You think Stanton would complain?

Nicolay stirs in the next bed.

JOHN HAY

Ummm... I don't know, sir, I don't know who you're, uh... What time is it?

LINCOLN

It's three forty in the morning.

JOHN NICOLAY

(not waking up:)  
Don't... let him pardon any more deserters...

Nicolay's asleep again.

JOHN HAY

Mr. Stanton thinks you pardon too many. He's generally apoplectic on the subject -

LINCOLN

He oughtn't to have done that, crippled his horse, that was cruel, but you don't just hang a sixteen year old boy for that -

JOHN HAY

Ask the horse what he thinks.

LINCOLN

- for cruelty. There'd be no sixteen year old boys left.  
(a beat, then:)  
Grant wants me to bring the secesh delegates to Washington.

JOHN HAY

So... There are secesh delegates?

LINCOLN

(scribbling a note,  
signing the petition:)  
He was afraid, that's all it was. I don't care to hang a boy for being frightened, either. What good would it do him?

He signs the pardon. Then he gives Hay's leg a few hard thwacks and a squeeze. It hurts a little. Hay winces.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)  
War's nearly done. Ain't that so?  
What use one more corpse? Any more  
corpses?

Putting the rest of the petitions on Hay's bed, he stands to leave.

JOHN HAY  
Do you need company?

INT. HALLWAY, THE WHITE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

As before, Lincoln continues his slow and solitary walk.

LINCOLN (V.O.)  
Times like this, I'm best alone.

INT. THE TELEGRAPH ROOM, WAR DEPARTMENT - PRE-DAWN

Lincoln is seated at Eckert's desk, shawl wrapped around his shoulders, glasses on; he stares down into his hat, held between his knees. Homer Bates and Sam Beckwith are waiting for him.

Lincoln draws a handwritten note from his hat and carefully unfolds it.

LINCOLN  
"Lieutenant General Ulysses S.  
Grant, City Point. I have read your  
words with interest."

Sam Beckwith transcribes Lincoln's words into code on a pad with a pencil.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)  
"I ask that, regardless of any  
action I take in the matter of the  
visit of the Richmond  
commissioners, you maintain among  
your troops military preparedness  
for battle, as you have done until  
now."

He stops for a moment. Beckwith waits, pencil poised.

Lincoln looks at the note, folds it, tucks it in a band inside his hat.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

"Have Captain Saunders convey the commissioners to me here in Washington."

(another pause)

"A. Lincoln." And the date.

SAMUEL BECKWITH

(while writing:)

Yes sir.

Lincoln places the hat on the floor.

SAMUEL BECKWITH (CONT'D)

Shall I transmit, sir?

LINCOLN

(a beat, then:)

You think we choose to be born?

SAMUEL BECKWITH

I don't suppose so.

LINCOLN

Are we fitted to the times we're born into?

SAMUEL BECKWITH

I don't know about myself. You may be, sir. Fitted.

LINCOLN

(to Homer:)

What do you reckon?

HOMER BATES

I'm an engineer. I reckon there's machinery but no one's done the fitting.

LINCOLN

You're an engineer, you must know Euclid's axioms and common notions.

HOMER BATES

I must've in school, but...

LINCOLN

I never had much of schooling, but I read Euclid, in an old book I borrowed. Little enough ever found its way in here -

(touching his cranium)

- but once learnt it stayed learnt.

Euclid's first common notion is this: "Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other."

Homer doesn't get it; neither does Sam.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

That's a rule of mathematical reasoning. It's true because it works; has done and always will do. In his book, Euclid says this is "self-evident."

(a beat)

D'you see? There it is, even in that two-thousand year old book of mechanical law: it is a self-evident truth that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. We begin with equality. That's the origin, isn't it? That balance, that's fairness, that's justice.

He looks at his scribbled note, then at Sam and Homer.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Read me the last sentence of my telegram.

SAMUEL BECKWITH

"Have Captain Saunders convey the commissioners to me here in Washington."

LINCOLN

A slight emendation, Sam, if you would.

Beckwith writes as Lincoln dictates.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

"Have Captain Saunders convey the gentlemen aboard the River Queen as far as Hampton Roads, Virginia, and there wait until..."

(beat)

"...further advice from me. Do not proceed to Washington."

INT. HOUSE CHAMBER, THE CAPITOL - LATE MORNING

The chamber's noisy and packed. In the balcony's front row, a wall of newspapermen, notebooks at the ready.

TITLE: **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**JANUARY 27**

Ashley, Colfax, and Stevens approach Stevens's desk. Colfax nods towards the journalists in the balcony:

SCHUYLER COLFAX

The World, the Herald and the Times, New York, Chicago, the Journal of Commerce, even your hometown paper's here.

JAMES ASHLEY

(to Stevens:)

Say you believe only in legal equality for all races, not racial equality, I beg you, sir. Compromise. Or you risk it all.

Stevens sees Mary, with Mrs. Keckley, claiming front seats from two journalists.

INT. HOUSE CHAMBER, THE CAPITOL - LATER

Stevens, at the podium, is being challenged by Fernando Wood, standing at his desk.

FERNANDO WOOD

I've asked you a question, Mr. Stevens, and you must answer me. Do you or do you not hold that the precept that "all men are created equal" is meant literally?

All eyes are on Stevens, the chamber quiet except for a scratching sound: the journalists have begun scribbling.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)

Is that not the true purpose of the amendment? To promote your ultimate and ardent dream to elevate -

THADDEUS STEVENS

The true purpose of the amendment, Mr. Wood, you perfectly-named, brainless, obstructive *object*?

FERNANDO WOOD

You have always insisted, Mr. Stevens, that Negroes are the same as white men are.

THADDEUS STEVENS

The true purpose of the amendment -

Stevens looks up at the balcony, at the waiting journalists, and Mary, who raises her eyebrows, then at Ashley and Litton at their desks. Seward watches from the balcony.

Stevens returns to Wood.

THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)

I don't hold with equality in all things only with equality before the law and nothing more.

FERNANDO WOOD

(surprised:)

That's not so! You believe that Negroes are entirely equal to white men. You've said it a thousand times -

GEORGE PENDLETON

(leaping to his feet)

For shame! For shame! Stop prevaricating and answer Representative Wood!

THADDEUS STEVENS

I don't hold with equality in all things, only with equality before the law and nothing more.

GEORGE PENDLETON

(stands:)

After the decades of fervent advocacy on behalf of the colored race -

JAMES ASHLEY

(leaping up:)

He's answered your questions! This amendment has naught to do with race equality!

Pendleton persists, through cheers and catcalls.

GEORGE PENDLETON

You have long insisted, have you not, that the dusk-colored race is no different from the white one.

THADDEUS STEVENS

I don't hold with equality in all things only with equality before the law and nothing more.

Among the amendment's supporters, including Vintner Litton, a GROUP OF WOMEN SUFFRAGISTS in the balcony, and Elizabeth Keckley, there's visible, audible shock and dismay at Stevens's capitulation. Mary's surprised by Stevens, and impressed.

MARY

(whispering to Mrs.  
Keckley:)

Who'd ever've guessed that old  
nightmare capable of such control?  
He might make a politician someday -

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

(standing abruptly:)

I need to go.

Mary's startled. Mrs. Keckley leaves the balcony, pushing past journalists. On the floor:

GEORGE PENDLETON

Your frantic attempt to delude us  
now is unworthy of a  
representative. It is, in fact,  
unworthy of a white man!

THADDEUS STEVENS

(giving in to his anger:)

How *can* I hold that all men are  
created equal, when here before me -

(pointing to Pendleton:)

- stands stinking the moral carcass  
of the gentleman from Ohio, proof  
that some men are inferior, endowed  
by their Maker with dim wits  
impermeable to reason with cold  
pallid slime in their veins instead  
of hot red blood! You are more  
reptile than man, George, so low  
and flat that the foot of man is  
incapable of crushing you!

General uproar.

GEORGE PENDLETON

HOW DARE YOU!

THADDEUS STEVENS

Yet even you, Pendleton, who should  
have been gibbeted for treason  
long before today, even worthless  
unworthy you ought to be treated  
equally before the law! And so  
again, sir, and again and again and



again I say: I DO NOT HOLD WITH  
EQUALITY IN ALL THINGS. ONLY WITH  
EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW.

Ashley sits, nearly weeping with relief, while the chamber  
explodes: laughter, applause, boos.

GEORGE PENDLETON  
MR. SPEAKER, WILL YOU PERMIT THIS  
VILE BOORISH MAN TO SLANDER AND TO  
THREATEN ME AND -

The journalists pack up their notebooks; this is fun, but not  
newsworthy, and only a few bother to record it.

Stevens limps out through the aisle to wild Republican  
applause. He looks up to the balcony; Mary is looking down  
approvingly. He looks down before she can see him smile.

INT. A CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE HOUSE CHAMBER - LATER

Stevens sits on a bench, alone, thinking, troubled. Asa  
Vintner Litton approaches him.

ASA VINTNER LITTON  
You asked if ever I was surprised.

Stevens nods.

ASA VINTNER LITTON (CONT'D)  
Today, Mr. Stevens, I was  
surprised. You've led the battle  
for race equality for thirty years!  
The basis of, of every hope for  
this country's future life, you  
*denied Negro equality!* I'm  
nauseated. You refused to say that  
all humans are, well... human! Have  
you lost your very soul, Mr.  
Stevens? Is there *nothing* you won't  
say?

Stevens nods, then, quietly:

THADDEUS STEVENS  
I'm sorry you're nauseous, Asa,  
that must be unpleasant.  
I want the amendment to pass. So  
that the Constitution's first and  
only mention of slavery is its  
absolute prohibition. For this  
amendment, for which I have worked  
all of my life and for which

countless colored men and women  
 have fought and died and now  
 hundreds of thousands of soldiers -  
 no, sir, no, it seems there is very  
 nearly nothing I won't say.

EXT. THE STREETS OF WASHINGTON - MORNING

Lincoln and Robert are in the buggy driven by the old soldier; a young bodyguard soldier sits beside the driver, his rifle uselessly tucked under his legs. Lincoln is on one side reading over a stack of documents. Robert's on the other side of the buggy, staring sullenly at his feet.

The buggy stops outside an army hospital. Lincoln packs up his papers.

ROBERT  
 I'm not going in.

LINCOLN  
 You said you wanted to help me.

ROBERT  
 This is - This is just a clumsy  
 attempt at discouragement. I've  
 been to army hospitals, I've seen  
 surgeries, I went and visited the  
 malaria barges with mama.

LINCOLN  
 She told me she didn't take you  
 inside.

ROBERT  
 I snuck in after - I've seen what  
 it's like. This changes nothing.

LINCOLN  
 At all rates, I'm happy to have  
 your company.

Stepping out of the buggy, he hands his folio to the bodyguard and enters the army hospital.

INT. ARMY HOSPITAL - MORNING

He's met in the antechamber by an ARMY SURGEON.

LINCOLN  
 Morning, Jim.

ARMY SURGEON  
Hello, Mr. President.

LINCOLN  
Good to see you again.

They move into the main ward, Lincoln removing his hat.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)  
Well, boys, first question: You  
getting enough to eat?

He walks from bed to bed, shaking hands with each patient.  
Most are amputees.

FIRST PATIENT  
Hello, sir.

LINCOLN  
What's your name, soldier?

FIRST PATIENT  
Robert.

LINCOLN  
Robert. Good to meet you, Robert.

SECOND PATIENT  
Nice to meet you.

LINCOLN  
What's your name?

SECOND PATIENT  
Kevin.

LINCOLN  
Tell me your names as I go past. I  
like to know who I'm talkin' to.  
Kevin.

THIRD PATIENT  
Mr. President. John.

LINCOLN  
John. I've seen you before.

FOURTH PATIENT  
Mr. President...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE ARMY HOSPITAL - MORNING

Robert, brooding, waits in the buggy.

Hearing a creaking, rumbling sound, Robert turns to see TWO BLACK ORDERLIES in grey uniforms wrangling a large top-heavy wheelbarrow, covered with filthy canvas. One orderly pushes while the other keeps the barrow from tipping over.

Robert notices, in the barrow's wake, a trail of blood. He gets out of the buggy and follows as the orderlies turn a corner of the building.

Behind the building, where the ground is bare, pitted with puddles of water, Robert watches as the orderlies reach the edge of a shallow pit. One orderly pulls the canvas back, revealing severed legs, arms, hands, rotten, burnt, shattered by bullet or bomb.

Robert watches as they toss the remains into the pit. Quicklime is shoveled atop the limbs.

Robert walks away, unsteady.

Around the corner, he fumbles through his pockets for rolling paper and tobacco. He locates these and tries to focus on rolling a cigarette, his hands shaking. He tries harder to control his hands, his feelings, but he can't. He has a panic attack, crying, hiccupy shallow breathing, face flushed. Frustrated, he throws down the cigarette and tries to hold back tears.

LINCOLN (O.C.)

What's the matter, Bob?

Robert looks up, mortified, to see Lincoln watching him with concern. He wipes his eyes, his mouth.

ROBERT

I have to do this! And I will do it and I don't need your permission to enlist.

LINCOLN

That same speech has been made by how many sons to how many fathers since the war began? "I don't need your damn permission, you miserable old goat, I'm gonna enlist anyhow!" And what wouldn't those numberless fathers have given to be able to say to their sons - as I now say to mine - "I'm commander-in-chief, so in point of fact, without my permission, you ain't enlisting in nothing, nowhere, young man."

ROBERT

It's mama you're scared of, not me getting killed.

Lincoln slaps Robert in the face. It shocks them both.

Lincoln tries to embrace Robert, but Robert shoulders past him and walks back toward the front of the building. He turns.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I have to do this! And I will! Or I will feel ashamed of myself for the rest of my life. Whether or not you fought is what's gonna matter. And not just to other people, but to myself.

I won't be you, pa. I can't do that. But I don't want to be nothing.

He hurries away.

LINCOLN

We can't lose you.

INT. MARY'S BOUDOIR, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Outside, driving rain and wind. Lincoln sits by the window, in his coat, vest and tie, hair combed neatly.

LINCOLN

He'll be fine, Molly. City Point's far from the front lines, from the fighting, he'll be an adjutant running messages for General Grant.

Mary sits at her vanity in a beautiful evening dress, pale with rage.

MARY

The war will take our son! A sniper, or a shrapnel shell! Or typhus, same as took Willie, it takes hundreds of boys a day! He'll die, uselessly, and how will I ever forgive you? Most men, their firstborn is their favorite, but you, you've always blamed Robert for being born, for trapping you in a marriage that's only ever given you grief and caused you regret!

LINCOLN

That's not true -

MARY

And if the slaughter of Cold Harbor is on your hands same as Grant, God help us! We'll pay for the oceans of spilled blood you've sanctioned, the uncountable corpses we'll be made to pay with our son's dear blood -

Lincoln rises from the window seat, angry.

LINCOLN

Just, just this once, Mrs. Lincoln, I demand of you to try and take the liberal and not the selfish point of view! You imagine Robert will forgive us if we continue to stifle his very natural ambition?!

MARY

(with a mocking smile:)

And if I refuse to take the high road, if I won't take up the rough old cross, will you threaten me again with the madhouse, as you did when I couldn't stop crying over Willie, when I showed you what heartbreak, *real heartbreak* looked like, and you hadn't the courage to countenance it, to help me -

LINCOLN

That's right. When you refused so much as to comfort Tad -

MARY

I was in the room with Willie, I was holding him in my arms as he died!

LINCOLN

- the child who was not only sick, dangerously sick, but beside himself with grief?

MARY

How dare you!

LINCOLN

Oh but *your* grief, *your* grief, your inexhaustible grief!

MARY

How dare you throw that at me?!

LINCOLN

And his mother won't let him  
 near her, 'cause she's  
 screaming from morning to  
 night pacing the corridors,  
*howling at shadows and  
 furniture and ghosts!* I ought  
 to have done it, I ought have  
 done for Tad's sake, for  
*everybody's goddamned sake,* I  
 should have clapped you in  
 the madhouse!

MARY

I couldn't let Tad in! I  
 couldn't risk him seeing how  
*angry I was!*

MARY (CONT'D)

THEN DO IT! Do it! Don't you  
 threaten me, you do it this time!  
 Lock me away! You'll have to, I  
 swear, if Robert is killed!

Silence. Then:

LINCOLN

I couldn't tolerate you grieving so  
 for Willie because I couldn't  
 permit it in myself, though I  
 wanted to, Mary. I wanted to crawl  
 under the earth, into the vault  
 with his coffin. I still do. Every  
 day I do.

Don't... talk to me about grief.

(beat:)

I must make my decisions, Bob must  
 make his, you yours. And bear what  
 we must, hold and carry what we  
 must. What I carry within me - you  
 must allow me to do it, alone as I  
 must. And you alone, Mary, you  
 alone may lighten this burden, or  
 render it intolerable. As you  
 choose.

She opens her mouth to make an angry reply, then stops, and  
 watches as he leaves the room.

INT. ODD FELLOWS' HALL, WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Onstage, Gounod's Faust, Act Three, scene eight, the garden  
 outside Marguerite's cottage, a gorgeously romantic night.  
 MARGUERITE and FAUST are alone singing. The Lincolns, in  
 their box, watch quietly. Elizabeth Keckley sits next to  
 Mary.

Mary turns to Lincoln. They speak in whispers. Mrs. Keckley tries not to listen but she can't help hearing what they say.

MARY

You think I'm ignorant of what you're up to because you haven't discussed this scheme with me as you ought to have done. When have I ever been so easily bamboozled?

(beat)

I believe you when you insist that amending the constitution and abolishing slavery will end this war. And since you are sending my son into the war, woe unto you if you fail to pass the amendment.

LINCOLN

Seward doesn't want me leaving big muddy footprints all over town.

MARY

No one ever lived who knows better than you the proper placement of footfalls on treacherous paths. Seward can't do it. You must. Because if you fail to secure the necessary votes, woe unto you, sir. You will answer to me.

EXT. THE PORTICO OF THE WHITE HOUSE - A SHORT WHILE LATER

The carriage has pulled up and Mary is entering the White House. Lincoln helps Mrs. Keckley down from the carriage.

She hesitates before proceeding in. Then she faces Lincoln.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

I know the vote is only four days away; I know you're concerned. Thank you for your concern over this, and I want you to know: They'll approve it. God will see to it.

LINCOLN

I don't envy him his task. He may wish He'd chosen an instrument for His purpose more wieldy than the House of Representatives.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

Then you'll see to it.



Lincoln looks at her, considering. Then:

LINCOLN

Are you afraid of what lies ahead?  
For your people? If we succeed?

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

White people don't want us here.

LINCOLN

Many don't.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

What about you?

LINCOLN

I...I don't know you, Mrs. Keckley.  
Any of you. You're ...familiar to  
me, as all people are.  
Unaccommodated, poor, bare, forked  
creatures such as we all are. You  
have a right to expect what I  
expect, and likely our expectations  
are not incomprehensible to each  
other. I assume I'll get used to  
you. But what you are to the  
nation, what'll become of you once  
slavery's day is done, I don't  
know.

ELIZABETH KECKLEY

What my people are to be, I can't  
say. Negroes have been fighting and  
dying for freedom since the first  
of us was a slave. I never heard  
any ask what freedom will bring.  
Freedom's first. As for me: My son  
died, fighting for the Union,  
wearing the Union blue. For freedom  
he died. I'm his mother. That's  
what I am to the nation, Mr.  
Lincoln. What else must I be?

INT. A BEDROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - LATE NIGHT

The room is far filthier and more cluttered than before.  
Bilbo and Latham are playing cards. Schell is asleep in bed.

W.N. BILBO

My whole hand's gonna be proud in  
about five seconds, let's see how  
proud you gonna be.

ROBERT LATHAM

Oh, it is? What you got goin'?

There's a quick knock on the door.

W.N. BILBO

Yeah?

ROBERT LATHAM

Go away!

(to Bilbo)

That watch fob, is that gold?

W.N. BILBO

You keep your eyes off my fob!

Seward enters, displeased, as they show their cards, laughing.

ROBERT LATHAM

Nines paired!

W.N. BILBO

Oh my God damn!

SEWARD

Gentlemen. You have a visitor.

Latham jovially collects his winnings. He stops short when Lincoln steps into the room, cloak and stovepipe, very tall.

W.N. BILBO

Well, I'll be fucked.

LINCOLN

I wouldn't bet against it, Mr...?

Schell startles awake as Bilbo puts down his cigar and wipes his hand on his vest.

W.N. BILBO

W.N. Bilbo.

LINCOLN

Mr. Bilbo. Gentlemen.

ROBERT LATHAM

Sir...

W.N. BILBO

Why are you here? No offense, but Mr. Seward's banished the very mention of your name, he won't even

let us use fifty-cent pieces 'cause they got your face on 'em.

LINCOLN

The Secretary of State here tells me that, uh, you got eleven Democrats in the bag. That's encouraging.

ROBERT LATHAM

Oh, you've got no cause to be encouraged. Sir. Uh...

RICHARD SCHELL

Are we being...fired?

Lincoln sits at the card table.

LINCOLN

"We have heard the chimes of midnight, Master Shallow." I'm here to alert you boys that the great day of reckoning is nigh upon us.

RICHARD SCHELL

The Democrats we've yet to bag, sir. The patronage jobs simply won't bag 'em. They require more...convincing, Mr. President.

Lincoln nods. He turns to Bilbo.

LINCOLN

Mm-hmm. Do me a favor, willya?

W.N. BILBO

Sure.

LINCOLN

Snagged my eye in the paper this morning. Governor Curtin is set to declare a winner in the disputed Congressional election for the -

W.N. BILBO

Pennsylvania 16th District.

LINCOLN

What a joy to be comprehended. Hop on a train to Philadell, call on the Governor -

SEWARD  
 (looking askance at  
 Bilbo's appearance:)  
 Send Latham. Or Schell.

LINCOLN  
 (to Bilbo:)  
 No, he'll do fine, just polish  
 yourself up first.

Bilbo, cigar back in mouth, laughs.

ROBERT LATHAM  
 The incumbent is claiming he won  
 it. Name of, uh...

W.N. BILBO  
 Coffroth.

LINCOLN  
 That's him.

RICHARD SCHELL  
 Coffroth. He is a Democrat.

<p>LINCOLN          I understand he is.          Let Governor Curtin know it'd          be much appreciated if he'd          invite the House of          Representatives to decide who          won. He's entitled to do          that. He'll agree to it.          (to Schell:)          Then advise Coffroth, if he          hopes to retain his seat,          that he'd better pay a visit          to Thaddeus Stevens.</p>	<p>W.N. BILBO          Silly name.</p>
---	--

SEWARD  
 Pity poor Coffroth.

INT. THADDEUS STEVENS'S OFFICE, THE CAPITOL - NIGHT

Stevens is at his desk, paperwork piled high. There's a knock  
 at the door.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 It opens!

A nervous man enters hesitantly: Alexander Coffroth.

Stevens glares at him with what looks like horror. Coffroth's frightened smile transforms into a rictus of pain. Then:

THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)  
You are Canfrey?

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
Coffroth, Mr. Stevens, Alexander  
Coffroth, I'm, I'm -

THADDEUS STEVENS  
(skeptical)  
Are we representatives of the same  
state?

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
Y-yes sir! We sit only three desks  
apart -

Stevens waves him into a chair.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
I haven't noticed you. I'm a  
Republican, and you, Coughdrop, are  
a Democrat?

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
Well, I... Um, that is to say... I -

THADDEUS STEVENS  
The modern travesty of Thomas  
Jefferson's political organization  
to which you have attached yourself  
like a barnacle has the effrontery  
to call itself The Democratic  
Party. You are a Dem-o-crat.  
What's the matter with you? Are you  
wicked?

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
Well, I felt, um, formerly, I -

THADDEUS STEVENS  
Never mind, Coffsnott. You were  
ignominiously trounced at the  
hustings in November's election by  
your worthy challenger, a  
Republican -

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
No, sir, I was not, um, trounced!  
Uh, he wants to steal my seat! I  
didn't lose the election -

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 What difference does it make if you  
 lost or not?! The governor of our  
 state, is...? A Democrat?

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
 No, he's a...  
 (baffled, terrified:)  
 A, um, a Ruh...

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 Re.

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
 Re.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 (nods)  
 Pub.

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
 Pub.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 Li.

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
 Li.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 Can.

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
 Can.  
 Republican.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
 I know what he is. This is a  
 rhetorical exercise. And Congress  
 is controlled by what party? Yours?

Coffroth doesn't know whether to answer. He shakes his head.

THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)  
 Your party was *beaten*, your  
 challenger's party now controls the  
 House, and hence the House  
 Committee on Elections, so you have  
 been *beaten*. You shall shortly be  
 sent home in disgrace. Unless.

ALEXANDER COFFROTH

I know what I must do, sir! I will immediately become a Republican and vote yes for -

THADDEUS STEVENS

NO! *Coffroth* will vote yes but *Coffroth* will remain a Democrat until after he does so.

ALEXANDER COFFROTH

Why wait to switch? I'm happy to switch -

THADDEUS STEVENS

We want to show the amendment has bipartisan support, you idiot. Early in the next Congress, when I tell you to do so, you will switch parties. Now congratulations on your victory, and get out.

INT. A BEDROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - LATE NIGHT

Continue with Lincoln and his operatives around the card table.

LINCOLN

Now give me the names of whoever else you been hunting.

Schell, Latham and Bilbo exchange looks, then:

ROBERT LATHAM

George Yeaman.

RICHARD SCHELL

Yes. Yeaman.

W.N. BILBO

Among others. But Yeaman: That'd count.

ROBERT LATHAM

(helpfully)

Y-E-A-M-A-N

Lincoln looks up from his notepad, smiling.

LINCOLN

I got it.

ROBERT LATHAM  
Kentucky.

INT. SEWARD'S OFFICE, STATE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Seward sits at his grand desk, looking on with an anxious scowl. Lincoln sits on the edge of Seward's desk. Yeaman sits in a chair facing him.

GEORGE YEAMAN  
I can't vote for the amendment, Mr. Lincoln.

LINCOLN  
I saw a barge once, Mr. Yeaman, filled with colored men in chains, heading down the Mississippi to the New Orleans slave markets. It sickened me, 'n more than that, it brought a shadow down, a pall around my eyes.

(beat)  
Slavery troubled me, as long as I can remember, in a way it never troubled my father, though he hated it. In his own fashion. He knew no smallholding dirt farmer could compete with slave plantations. He took us out from Kentucky to get away from 'em. He wanted Indiana kept free. He wasn't a kind man, but there was a rough moral urge for fairness, for freedom in him. I learnt that from him, I suppose, if little else from him. We didn't care for one another, Mr. Yeaman.

GEORGE YEAMAN  
(embarrassed)  
I... Well, I'm sorry to hear that -

LINCOLN  
Lovingkindness, that most ordinary thing, came to me from other sources. I'm grateful for that.

GEORGE YEAMAN  
I hate it, too, sir, slavery, but - but we're entirely unready for emancipation. There's too many questions -



LINCOLN

(laughs)

We're unready for peace too, ain't we? When it comes, it'll present us with conundrums and dangers greater than any we've faced during the war, bloody as it's been. We'll have to extemporize and experiment with *what* it is *when* it is.

Lincoln moves from the desk to take the seat beside Yeaman, no longer towering over him. He leans forward and rests a hand on Yeaman's knee.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I read your speech, George. Negroes and the vote, that's a puzzle.

GEORGE YEAMAN

No, no, but, but, but - But Negroes can't, um, vote, Mr. Lincoln. You're not suggesting that we enfranchise colored people.

LINCOLN

I'm asking only that you disenthral yourself from the slave powers. I'll let you know when there's an offer on my desk for surrender.

There's none before us now. What's before us now, that's the vote on the Thirteenth Amendment. It's going to be so very close. You see what you can do.

Lincoln leaves Yeaman, considering.

EXT. A WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD IN WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Lincoln stands in front of William Hutton's row house, talking to Hutton. The funeral wreath still hangs on the door behind them, displaying the marks of time passing: faded, weatherbeaten, dusty.

WILLIAM HUTTON

I can't make sense of it, what he died for. Mr. Lincoln, I hate them all, I do, all black people. I am a prejudiced man.

The door opens slightly behind Hutton. His wife looks out. Hutton exchanges a glance with her, and the door shuts again.

LINCOLN

I'd change that in you if I could,  
but that's not why I come. I might  
be wrong, Mr. Hutton, but I  
expect... Colored people will most  
likely be free, and when that's so,  
it's simple truth that your  
brother's bravery, and his death,  
helped make it so. Only you can  
decide whether that's sense enough  
for you, or not.

Hutton walks slowly back to his house.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

My deepest sympathies to your  
family.

Lincoln goes back to his buggy. Hutton pauses at his door to  
watch Lincoln's buggy drive away.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lincoln is seated at the head of the cabinet table along with  
Seward. Ashley, Preston and Montgomery Blair. Hay and Nicolay  
sit in their usual chairs.

PRESTON BLAIR

(angry:)

We've managed our members to a fare-  
thee-well, you've had no defections  
from the Republican right to  
trouble you, whereas as to what you  
promised - Where the hell are the  
commissioners?!

JAMES ASHLEY

Oh God...

(to Lincoln:)

It's true! You, you...lied to me,  
Mr. Lincoln! You evaded my requests  
for a denial that, that there is a  
Confederate peace offer because,  
because there is one! We are  
absolutely guaranteed to lose the  
whole thing -

JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
 - and we'll be discredited,  
 the amendment itself will be  
 tainted. What if, what if  
 these peace commissioners  
 appear today? Or worse, on  
 the morning -

MONTGOMERY BLAIR  
 We don't need a goddamned  
 abolition amendment! Leave  
 the Constitution alone! State  
 by state you can extirpate -

LINCOLN  
 I can't listen to this anymore! I  
 can't accomplish a goddamned thing  
 of any human *meaning or worth* until  
 we cure ourselves of slavery and  
 end this pestilential war, and  
 whether any of you or anyone else  
 knows it, I know I need *this! This*  
*amendment is that cure!* We're  
 stepped out upon the world's stage  
 now, *now*, with the fate of human  
 dignity in our hands! Blood's been  
 spilt to afford us this moment!

He points around the table at Ashley, Monty, Preston.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)  
*Now now now!* And you grousle and  
 heckle and dodge about like  
 pettifogging Tammany Hall  
 hucksters! *See what is before you!*  
*See the here and now!* That's the  
 hardest thing, the only thing that  
 accounts! Abolishing slavery by  
 constitutional provision settles  
 the fate, for all coming time, not  
 only of the millions now in bondage  
 but of unborn millions to come. Two  
 votes stand in its way, and these  
 votes must be procured.

SEWARD  
 We need two yeses, three  
 abstentions, or four yeses and one  
 more abstention and the amendment  
 will pass -

LINCOLN  
 You got a night and a day and a  
 night and several perfectly good  
 hours! Now get the hell out of here  
 and get 'em!

JAMES ASHLEY  
 Yes but *how?*

LINCOLN  
*Buzzards' guts, man.*

Lincoln rises, and keeps rising, till he seems eight feet tall.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)  
 I am the President of the United States of America, *clothed in immense power!* You will procure me these votes.

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER - DAWN

The chamber is quiet and dark. Pages and clerks prepare the desks, laying out pens and paper, filling inkwells.

TITLE: **THE MORNING OF THE VOTE**

**JANUARY 31, 1865**

A CLERK is draping red-white-and-blue bunting on the desks of representatives from seceded states. These will of course remain unoccupied during the vote.

The first Congressman to arrive, Thaddeus Stevens clumps in. He goes to his desk and sits. He looks around the empty chamber, ready and waiting.

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER - MORNING, SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Thaddeus Stevens is at his desk. The House is in session, the floor full of congressmen caucusing and arguing.

The balcony's packed. Mary and Keckley sit at the front, Nicolay and Hay behind them. The Blairs are among other officials, rich people, foreign dignitaries.

There's a sudden quiet, then murmuring. Ashley, Stevens and everyone on the floor look up, Ellis, Hollister, Hutton and Hawkins among these.

In the balcony, twenty WELL-TO-DO BLACK PEOPLE, mostly men, are escorted by several Senators, including Sumner and Wade, to a reserved section of the balcony. The black people glance at their surroundings but are rigidly composed.

Asa Vintner Litton sees them enter. He looks about, at the representatives caucusing, or staring up at the visitors. Something powerful strikes him. In a voice coarse with emotion, he calls up to the black visitors:

ASA VINTNER LITTON

We welcome you, ladies and gentlemen, first in the history of this people's chamber, to *your House!*

There's tense applause. Some of the black guests bow; most aren't sure how to respond.

Yeaman watches this, deeply moved.

Bilbo catches Hawkins's eye and waves. Hawkins looks anxiously around, blushing.

Everyone is seated, and the place is packed.

Schuyler Colfax is in his high seat atop the rostrum, the SERGEANT-AT-ARMS to his right. Colfax gavels the House into session. Ashley is at the podium.

SCHUYLER COLFAX

Mr. Ashley, the floor is yours.

JAMES ASHLEY

On the matter of the joint resolution before us, presenting a Thirteenth Amendment to our national Constitution, which was passed last year by the Senate, and which has been debated now by this estimable body for the past several weeks. Today we will vote...

Cheers, boos, applause.

JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D)

By mutual agreement we shall hear *brief* final statements -

General cheering for this, laughing.

JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D)

- beginning with the honorable George Pendleton of Ohio.

Applause, boos. Pendleton, taking the podium, is handed several letters by Wood. He holds them over his head. The chamber's quiet.

GEORGE PENDLETON

I've just received confirmation of what previously has been merely rumored! *Affidavits* from loyal citizens recently returned from

Richmond. They testify that Commissioners have indeed come north and ought to have arrived by now in Washington City! Bearing an offer of immediate cessation of our civil war!

The chamber explodes. Through the ensuing ruckus:

FERNANDO WOOD  
(to Ashley, fake shock:)  
Are there Confederate commissioners in the Capitol?

JAMES ASHLEY  
I don't... I have no idea where they are or if they've arrived or -

FERNANDO WOOD  
If they've arrived?!

GEORGE PENDLETON  
I appeal to my fellow Democrats, to all Republican representatives who give a fig for peace! Postpone this vote until we have answers from the President himself!

In the balcony, Hay and Nicolay exchange worried glances.

FERNANDO WOOD  
Postpone the vote!

Ashley turns to Stevens: "DO SOMETHING!" as Pendleton's Democrats begin to chant "POSTPONE THE VOTE!"

Mary, worried, looks from Mrs. Keckley to Preston Blair, who is focused on the leader of the conservative Republican representatives, AARON HADDAM (R, KY). Haddam looks up at Preston, awaiting instructions.

Democrats and Republicans rush to the Speaker to support or protest the motion.

In the balcony, Preston slowly stands, saddened and angry.

FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)  
I have made a motion! Does anyone here care to second -

Preston nods at Haddam: "Go ahead." Haddam rises.

AARON HADDAM

(in a powerful voice:)

Gentlemen.

The conservative faction of border and western Republicans cannot approve this amendment, about which we harbor grave doubts, if a peace offer is being held hostage to its success. Joining with our Democratic colleagues, I second the motion to postpone.

The debate swells again as, in the balcony, Schell scribbles in a notebook while Latham whispers furiously in his ear. Latham rips the page out before Schell's finished; Bilbo snatches it from him.

ROBERT LATHAM

Quick, man! Quick!

Bilbo pushes his way out of the balcony. Nicolay, then Hay, follow on his heels. Mary sees this; she's concerned.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAPITOL - AFTERNOON

Hay and Nicolay emerge. They see Bilbo running, far ahead. Hay immediately sprints after him and trips. Nicolay continues running.

INT/EXT. WHITE HOUSE PORTICO, FOYER, STAIRS - AFTERNOON

Bilbo puffs his way across the portico, through the door, and up the stairs. Hay gains on him. It's become a race!

In the second floor hallway, Bilbo gets winded, and Hay dashes past him. Hay reaches the doors to Lincoln's office and flings them open.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Lincoln is at his desk, working, when Hay bursts in. Bilbo appears in the doorway, beet-red and gasping for air.

Hay's too winded to speak. Bilbo holds out the note, limp with sweat, and brings it to Lincoln. Lincoln reads it.

LINCOLN

This is precisely what Mr. Wood wishes me to respond to?

Tad runs into the room, excited by the commotion. He wraps his arm around his father's neck, then tears wildly out of the room.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Word for word? This is precisely the assurance that he demands of me?

W.N. BILBO

Yes sir.

As Nicolay heaves into the room in last place, wheezing terribly, Lincoln deliberates for a moment, then writes a note. He blots, folds and hands it to Hay, who immediately reads it, Nicolay looking on.

LINCOLN

Give this to Mr. Ashley.

Hay looks at Nicolay, who can't speak; he waves at Hay to speak for him.

JOHN HAY

I feel, um, I have to say, Mr. Lincoln, that this -  
(annoyed, impatient, to Bilbo:)  
Could you please just step outside?!

W.N. BILBO

You gonna have a chat now, with with the whole of the House of Representatives waiting on that?

Nicolay continues gasping, trying to speak. He can't.

JOHN HAY

(to Lincoln:)  
Making false representation to Congress is, it's, um -

JOHN NICOLAY

It's, it's -

LINCOLN

Impeachable. I've made no false representation.

JOHN HAY

But there are -  
(Whispering:)



There *is* a delegation from  
Richmond.

LINCOLN  
Give me the note, Johnnie.

Hay gives Lincoln the note. Lincoln takes it, holding on to Hay's hand; with his free hand, Lincoln passes the note to Bilbo.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)  
(to Bilbo:)  
Please deliver that to Mr. Ashley.

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON

Bilbo, pushing past the pages, runs in, holding the note, Ashley snatches it, reading as he makes his way to the podium. All eyes are on Ashley.

JAMES ASHLEY  
From the President:

The chamber falls silent.

JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
"So far as I know, there are no  
peace commissioners in the city  
nor are there likely to be."

Applause, booing, furious discussion.

GEORGE PENDLETON  
"So far as I know-"?! That means  
nothing! Are there commissioners  
from the South or aren't there?!

In the balcony, Mary looks to Mrs. Keckley.

JAMES ASHLEY  
The President has answered you,  
sir! Your peace offer is a fiction!

GEORGE PENDLETON  
That is not a *denial*, it is a  
lawyer's dodge!

JAMES ASHLEY  
Mr. Haddam? Is your faction  
satisfied?

Preston, in the balcony, hesitates. He looks at his daughter, who gives him a questioning look: "Do you want this on your head?"

Preston doesn't. He indicates to Haddam with a small shake of his venerable head: "Drop it."

AARON HADDAM

The conservative Republican faction's satisfied, and we thank Mr. Lincoln. I move to table Mr. Wood's motion.

SCHUYLER COLFAX

Tabled!

There's an angry response, but Wood and Pendleton sit, thwarted.

JAMES ASHLEY

Speaker Colfax, I order the main question.

SCHUYLER COLFAX

A motion has been made to bring the bill for the Thirteenth Amendment to a vote. Do I hear a second?

ASA VINTNER LITTON

I second the motion.

SCHUYLER COLFAX

So moved, so ordered. The Clerk will now -  
(a rap of the gavel)  
Quiet please.

The noise of the chamber and balcony reduce to a rumble.

SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)

The clerk will now call the roll for voting.

Thaddeus Stevens sits silently, tired, concentrated: the moment has come.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

We begin with Connecticut. Mr. Augustus Benjamin, on the matter of this amendment, how say you?

The chamber is completely silent for the first time.

AUGUSTUS BENJAMIN

Nay!

The clerk records his vote.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. Arthur Bentleigh.

ARTHUR BENTLEIGH

Nay!

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. John Ellis, how say you?

JOHN ELLIS

Aye!

Angry shouts from Ellis's fellow Democrats, forcing Colfax to gavel for order.

DEMOCRATIC SENATOR  
What?! Shameful!

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Missouri next. Mr. Walter Appleton.

WALTER APPLETON

I vote no!

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. Josiah Burton.

JOSIAH BURTON rises to his feet. He is very, very tall and thin.

JOSIAH BURTON  
Beanpole Burton is pleased to vote  
yea!

Mary watches from the balcony, pleased, but anxious.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
The State of New Jersey. Mr.  
Nehemiah Cleary.

NEHEMIAH CLEARY

No.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. James Martinson.

JAMES ASHLEY

Mr. Martinson has delegated me to say he is indisposed and he abstains.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Austin J. Roberts.

JAMES ASHLEY

Also indisposed, also abstaining.

Shocked anger from the Democrats. Pendleton starts calculating votes on a sheet of paper. Wood grabs it and begins to calculate more rapidly.

In the balcony, Mary keeps track on her own list. She writes carefully next to Roberts's name: "15 TO WIN"

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

Illinois concluded. Mr. Harold Hollister, how say you?

Hollister glowers next to Hutton, who's silently praying.

HAROLD HOLLISTER

No.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Hutton? Mr. William Hutton, cast your vote.

Hutton looks up from his prayer.

WILLIAM HUTTON

William Hutton, remembering at this moment his beloved brother, Fredrick, votes against the amendment.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Lincoln watches Tad stacking books to make a fort for his lead toy soldiers.

INT/EXT. ROTUNDA AND FRONT DOOR OF THE CAPITOL - AFTERNOON

A field telegraph has been set up near the steps, at the front of the enormous crowd that's assembled before the Capitol. Poles are held up in the crowd by soldiers along which the telegraph wire is stretched.

A soldier stationed at the door of the Capitol relays the vote to another soldier manning the cipher key:

SOLDIER  
Webster Allen votes no.

The cipher operator instantly transmits.

INT. GRANT'S TELEGRAPH ROOM AT CITY POINT - AFTERNOON

OFFICERS are crowded in the small room, watching a SERGEANT transcribe as his cipher key clicks.

SERGEANT  
Webster Allen, Illinois, Democrat,  
votes...no.

The cipher key clicks again.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)  
Halberd Law, Indiana, Democrat,  
votes...no.

Grant observes this from the balcony above. Robert, in a captain's uniform, stands near him. Like his mother, Robert has a scorecard, and he's keeping track.

Grant turns his back on the proceedings to light a cigar. He's concerned at how close the vote is. Behind him the count continues:

SERGEANT (CONT'D)  
Archibald Moran...yes.

Robert has been looking at Grant; he returns to his score keeping.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)  
Ambrose Bailer...yes.

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON

The Clerk continues.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. Walter H. Washburn.

WALTER H. WASHBURN  
Votes no.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
And Mr. George Yeaman, how say you?

Yeaman doesn't respond. The silence this causes lengthens, till representatives begin to look to see what's happened. Yeaman sits, staring ahead, not responding. Thaddeus Stevens, sensing something's happening, looks in Yeaman's direction. Yeaman, still staring ahead, mumbles something, but it's inaudible.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (CONT'D)  
 Sorry Mr. Yeaman, I didn't hear you  
 vote -

GEORGE YEAMAN  
 (rising to his feet)  
 I said aye, Mr. McPherson.  
 AYE!!!

Great surprise, loud cheers and angry shouts.

FERNANDO WOOD  
 TRAITOR! TRAITOR!

Yeaman looks ready to faint. To the consternation of the Democrats, a mob of gleeful Republicans rushes across the aisle that separates the two parties; they surround Yeaman, shaking his hand, slapping him on the back. Colfax bangs the gavel.

SCHUYLER COLFAX  
 Order!

Pendleton is speechless. Litton turns to Ashley, both astonished; Ashley turns to Stevens, who watches, sharp, observant, giving nothing away.

Mary updates her tally: "8 TO WIN"

SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)  
 Order in the chamber!

Yeaman collapses back into his seat. The room quiets.

SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)  
 Mr. MacPherson, you may proceed.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
 Mr. Clay R. Hawkins of Ohio.

Hawkins seems to have been startled out of a reverie. Sick with fear, he looks up at the sound of his name. He can't speak. Wood and Pendleton watch this, deeply alarmed. Hawkins snaps out of it.

CLAY HAWKINS  
 Goddamn it, I'm voting yes.

A huge reaction to this. LeClerk gapes at Hawkins.

CLAY HAWKINS (CONT'D)  
(right at Pendleton and  
Wood!)

I don't care, shoot me dead! You  
shoot me dead I, I am voting yes!

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. Edwin F. LeClerk.

LeClerk, seated next to Hawkins and transfixed by his  
courage, turns dazedly to McPherson.

EDWIN LECLERK

No.

(then, standing abruptly:)  
Oh to hell with it, shoot me dead  
too. Yes!

The noise gets wilder. Pendleton fixes LeClerk and Hawkins  
with a murderous look.

EDWIN LECLERK (CONT'D)  
I mean, abstention. Abstention.

Disgust briefly flashing across his face, McPherson crosses  
out and changes LeClerk's vote to an abstention. The cheering  
and booing degenerates to intense argument about what this  
means for the vote count.

In the balcony, Bilbo looks at Hawkins, well-pleased.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. Alexander Coffroth.

Coffroth looks towards Stevens, who doesn't look at him.

ALEXANDER COFFROTH  
(proud of himself and  
happy about the reward  
he'll get:)

I. Vote. Yes.

Applause. Stevens still doesn't look at Coffroth, but,  
tickled, he grins and nods.

INT. GRANT'S TELEGRAPH ROOM AT CITY POINT - AFTERNOON

Grant stands with Robert at the balcony rail, waiting.

SERGEANT  
James Brooks...nay.

On a nearby board, a large map has been tacked backwards; on its reverse side, the count is being scrawled by an officer, who marks off the votes in quintiles in columns marked YEA and NAY.

SERGEANT AT ARMS  
 Josiah Grinnell...yea. Meyer  
 Straus...

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON

STRAUS rises.

MEYER STRAUS  
 Nay.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
 Mr. Joseph Marstern?

JOSEPH MARSTERN  
 Nay.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
 Mr. Chilton A. Elliot?

CHILTON A. ELLIOT  
 No!

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
 Mr. Daniel G. Stuart?

DANIEL G. STUART  
 I vote yes.

Then, in a sequence of rapid cuts:

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
 Mr. Howard Guilefoyle.

HOWARD GUILFOYLE  
 Yea.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
 John F. McKenzie.

JOHN F. MCKENZIE  
 Yea.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
 Andrew E. Fink.

ANDREW E. FINK  
 Nay.



THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. John A. Kassim.

JOHN A. KASSIM  
Yea.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Mr. Hanready.

AVON HANREADY  
Nay.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
And Mr. Rufus Warren?

RUFUS WARREN  
Yea.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Tad is on Lincoln's lap. They're examining a book, the pages of which feature illustrations comparing the varieties of species of insects, zebras, finches.

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON

The room is quiet and tense.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
The roll call concludes, voting is completed, now -

SCHUYLER COLFAX  
Mr. Clerk, please call my name, I want to cast a vote.

GEORGE PENDLETON  
I object! The Speaker doesn't vote!

SCHUYLER COLFAX  
The Speaker *may* vote if he so chooses.

GEORGE PENDLETON  
It is highly unusual, sir -

SCHUYLER COLFAX  
This isn't usual, Mr. Pendleton, this is history.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
How does Mr. Schuyler Colfax vote?

SCHUYLER COLFAX

(a look of surprise that  
this needs to be asked,  
then, stating the  
obvious:)

Aye, of course.

Laughter in the chamber. The Clerk tallies the vote, then passes the recorded vote to the Speaker. There's absolute silence.

In the balcony, Mary checks her own tally, not quite believing it.

SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)

The final vote: eight absent or not  
voting, fifty six votes against,  
one hundred nineteen votes for.  
With a margin of two votes -

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Lincoln stands, waiting. The only sound is the ticking of the clock. And then the ticking is slowly drowned out as bells begin to peal throughout the city. Lincoln raises the window as Tad rushes to him. The bells are joined by a cannonade. The sound of jubilation fills his office.

Lincoln turns from the window to Tad, who stares out eagerly, seeking out the source of the noise. Lincoln puts his hand on Tad's head. He looks down at his son, silent.

INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER, THE CAPITOL - LATE AFTERNOON

Representatives throw papers in the air, embrace, weep, shout, dance, climb on desks. In the balcony, Mary stands slowly, beyond tears or joy; Mrs. Keckley stands with her, smiling, crying. Preston Blair applauds vigorously. The black visitors join the general exultation, overwhelmed, some praying, others embracing and weeping.

Latham's, Schell's and Bilbo's seats are empty; they've gone.

Ashley, grinning from ear to ear, tears streaming down his face, is hoisted up on shoulders and marched around the room, as on the floor and in the balcony, people start singing "The Battle Cry of Freedom."

Pendleton, with the face of someone who's seen his world collapse into ruin, walks straight at Yeaman, who's listening to the singing, deeply moved, his face full of wonder. Pendleton turns, without a word, and leaves the House.

Yeaman laughs, and loudly joins in singing.

Stevens clumps over to the Clerk of the House, who is placing his tallies and the official copy of the amendment bill in a folio. He looks up.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
Congratulations, Mr. Chairman.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
The bill, Mr. McPherson, may I...?

The Clerk hands the bill to Stevens, who folds it and pockets it.

THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
That's...That's the official bill.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
I'll return it in the morning.  
Creased, but unharmed.

EXT. A STREET, WASHINGTON - DUSK

Celebrating crowds move towards the Mall, singing, carrying placards proclaiming the passage of the amendment.

Thaddeus Stevens is hobbling in the opposite direction, making difficult headway against the crowd, pushed and shoved, unrecognized; he shoves back, his ferocious scowl utterly at odds with the prevailing festive mood.

He reaches a modest house, unlocks the door and steps inside.

INT. THADDEUS STEVENS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stevens is met at the door by LYDIA SMITH, a black woman in her fifties. As she helps him off with his coat, he takes a piece of paper from his pocket.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
A gift for you.

She takes it.

THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)  
The greatest measure of the  
Nineteenth Century. Passed by  
corruption, aided and abetted by  
the purest man in America.

INT. THE BEDROOM IN THADDEUS STEVENS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stevens, in his nightgown, takes off his wig. He's bald.

He lies down in bed. Mrs. Smith is in bed already beside him. She's holding the paper he gave her.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
I wish you'd been present.

LYDIA SMITH  
I wish I'd been.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
It was a spectacle.

LYDIA SMITH  
You can't bring your housekeeper to  
the House. I won't give them  
gossip.  
(the paper)  
This is enough. This is... It's  
more than enough for now.

They kiss. He lies back. He grabs her hand.

THADDEUS STEVENS  
Read it to me again, my love.

LYDIA SMITH  
"Proposed -"

THADDEUS STEVENS  
And adopted.

LYDIA SMITH  
Adopted. "An Amendment to the  
Constitution of the United States.  
Section One: Neither slavery nor  
involuntary servitude, except as a  
punishment for crime whereof the  
party shall have been duly  
convicted, shall exist within the  
United States, or any place subject  
to their jurisdiction."

THADDEUS STEVENS  
Section Two:

LYDIA SMITH  
"Congress shall have power to  
enforce this amendment by  
appropriate legislation."

Thaddeus Stevens grins, nods, thinking, eyes sparkling.

INT./EXT. THE DOCK AT FORTRESS MONROE, HAMPTON ROADS,  
VIRGINIA - LATE AFTERNOON

Sailors cheer Lincoln's arrival. Lincoln walks across the gangway. Seward greets him amidst the cheers.

INT. THE SALOON ON BOARD THE RIVER QUEEN, HAMPTON ROADS,  
VIRGINIA - DAY

Lincoln, Seward and the commissioners are seated. Seward looks concerned at Lincoln's fatigue.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

Let me be blunt. Will the southern states resume their former position in the Union speedily enough to enable us to block ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment?

LINCOLN

I'd like peace immediately.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

Yes, and...?

LINCOLN

I'd like your states restored to their practical relations to the Union immediately.

Silence.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

If this could be given me in writing, as Vice President of the Confederacy, I'd bring that document with celerity to Jefferson Davis.

SEWARD

Surrender and we can discuss reconstruction.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

Surrender won't be thought of unless you've assured us, in writing, that we'll be readmitted in time to block this amendment.

R.M.T. HUNTER

This is the arrogant demand of a conqueror for a humiliating, abject -

SEWARD

You'll not be conquered people, Mr. Hunter. You will be citizens, returned to the laws and the guarantees of rights of the Constitution.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

Which now extinguishes slavery. And with it our economy. All our laws will be determined by a Congress of vengeful Yankees, all our rights'll be subject to a Supreme Court benched by Black Republican radicals. All our traditions will be obliterated. We won't know ourselves anymore.

LINCOLN

(a nod, then:)

We ain't here to discuss reconstruction, we have no legal basis for that discussion. But I don't want to deal falsely. The Northern states'll ratify, most of 'em. As I figure, it remains for two of the Southern states to do the same, even after all are readmitted. And I been working on that.

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

Tennessee and Louisiana.

LINCOLN

Arkansas too, most likely. It'll be ratified. Slavery, sir, it's done.

Hunter storms out of the cabin.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

If we submit ourselves to law, Alex, even submit to losing freedoms - the freedom to oppress, for instance - we may discover other freedoms previously unknown to us. Had you kept faith with democratic process, as frustrating as that can be -

JOHN A. CAMPBELL

Come sir, spare us at least these  
pieties. Did you defeat us with  
ballots?

ALEXANDER STEPHENS

How've you held your Union  
together? Through *democracy*? How  
many hundreds of thousands have  
died during your administration?  
Your Union, sir, is bonded in  
cannonfire and death.

LINCOLN

It may be you're right. But say all  
we done is show the world that  
democracy isn't chaos, that there  
is a great invisible strength in a  
people's union? Say we've shown  
that a people can endure awful  
sacrifice and yet cohere? Mightn't  
that save at least the *idea* of  
democracy, to aspire to?  
Eventually, to become worthy of? At  
all rates, whatever may be proven  
by blood and sacrifice must've been  
proved by now. Shall we stop this  
bleeding?

EXT. A CITY ON A SOUTHERN RIVER - NIGHT

Like a vision of apocalypse, a city on the banks of a broad  
river is being consumed in a hellish fire, as artillery  
shells rend the dark sky asunder, raining down destruction.

EXT. SIEGE LINES BEFORE PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA - MORNING

The morning is grey, and a dense fog covers a vast field.  
Lincoln, his stovepipe hat atop his head, is mounted on a  
horse on a rise at one end of the field. Behind him, several  
UNION OFFICERS are also mounted. It's chilly; the breath of  
the men and the horses is visible.

TITLE: **OUTSIDE PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA**

**APRIL 3**

Lincoln flicks the reins of his horse, which starts down the  
slope. The officers follow behind him. No one speaks.

Lincoln rides slowly, his focus on the ground before him. Debris is scattered all around him, along with the bodies of fallen soldiers.

He looks up and across the battlefield; a terrible battle has concluded a couple of hours ago.

Looking down, as he rides, he sees soldiers killed by artillery fire, whose bodies lie twisted, burned, headless, limbless, torn in two, blown out of their clothing or charred too badly to tell. He sees soldiers killed by rifle and bayonet, whose corpses are intact.

At the beginning of his ride, all the dead and wounded are in Union blue, the casualties of Confederate cannon fire, felled as the Union army, about six hours earlier, began its final, successful drive to break through Confederate lines.

As Lincoln and his escorts move across the battlefield, grey and blue uniformed corpses and badly wounded men intermingle.

He reaches the other side of the field, passing a Confederate flag to enter the now-ruined town of Petersburg.

EXT. THE THOMAS WALLACE HOUSE, GRANT'S TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS, ON MARKET STREET, PETERSBURG - MORNING

Grant, smoking his cigar, his uniform dusty and rumpled, is sitting on the small porch. He stares piercingly at Lincoln, in a rocker next to him, watching his troops pass by as they move in to secure the conquered town. Lincoln closes his eyes.

He has grown older, the skin around his eyes is cobwebbed with fine creases, and his hair's thinner, softer, suffused with grey. His brow has grown smoother.

LINCOLN

Once he surrenders, send his boys back to their homes, their farms, their shops.

GRANT

Yes sir, as we discussed.

LINCOLN

Liberality all around. No punishment. I don't want that. And the leaders - Jeff and the rest of 'em - if they escape, leave the country while my back's turned, that wouldn't upset me none.



When peace comes it mustn't just be hangings.

GRANT

By outward appearance, you're ten years older than you were a year ago.

LINCOLN

Some weariness has bit at my bones.

(beat)

I never seen the like of it before. What I seen today. Never seen the like of it before.

GRANT

You always knew that, what this was going to be. Intimate, and ugly. You must've needed to see it close when you decided to come down here.

LINCOLN

We've made it possible for one another to do terrible things.

GRANT

And we've won the war. Now you have to lead us out of it.

EXT. THE MCLEAN HOUSE, APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE, VIRGINIA -  
AFTERNOON

OFFICERS OF THE CONFEDERATE AND UNION ARMY stand around in the afternoon sun. Everyone's solemn, even stunned by what's just happened. No one is speaking.

**TITLE: APPOMATTOX COURTHOUSE, VIRGINIA**

**APRIL 9, 1865**

ROBERT E. LEE comes down the steps of the McLean house, as a CONFEDERATE OFFICER brings his horse to him. His face is blank. Lee mounts his waiting horse.

Lee should leave, having just surrendered to Grant inside; but he's immobile. Some of the officers of both sides look at Lee, some can't bear it. Lee tries out various expressions: pride, defiance, blankness.

Grant stomps onto the porch of the house, followed by his staff. Among them is Robert Lincoln.

Grant, lost in thought, stops, taken aback, realizing that Lee's still there, astride his horse. Everyone looks at the two men who look awkwardly at one another.

Then Grant removes his famous slouch hat. Everyone freezes for a moment, and then one by one, the officers of the Union Army remove their hats.

Lee is visibly moved by this gesture of respect. He raises his hat, briefly, only an inch from his head. Then, pulling slightly on his horse's reins, he rides away.

EXT. A BUGGY RIDE THROUGH WASHINGTON - AFTERNOON

A beautiful spring afternoon. Lincoln and Mary are riding in the buggy, driven by the old soldier.

MARY

You've an itch to travel?

LINCOLN

I'd like that. To the West by rail.

MARY

(shaking her head no:)  
Overseas.

LINCOLN

The Holy Land.

MARY

(a laugh, then:)  
Awfully pious for a man who takes his wife out buggy-riding on Good Friday.

LINCOLN

Jerusalem. Where David and Solomon walked. I dream of walking in that ancient city.

She seems sadder. They ride in silence.

MARY

All anyone will remember of me is I was crazy and I ruined your happiness.

LINCOLN

Anyone thinks that doesn't understand, Molly.

She nods; then, tenderly:

MARY

When they look at you, at what it cost to live at the heart of this, they'll wonder at it. They'll wonder at you. They should. But they should also look at the wretched woman by your side, if they want to understand what this was truly like. For an ordinary person. For anyone other than you.

Lincoln laughs, takes her hand. She leans against him.

LINCOLN

We must try to be happier. We must. Both of us. We've been so miserable for so long.

INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Lincoln's in the shirtsleeves and vest of his formal evening wear, his hair brushed down and plastered in place. William Slade is working the tie and gloves. James Ashley and Schuyler Colfax stand with him, holding glasses of scotch whiskey. Slade waits with Lincoln's coat, clothes brush, the stovepipe hat and gloves on the table.

John Hay tears down several of the military maps, heavily marked, from the bookcases where they're tacked. He drops these on the floor. As they watch Hay:

LINCOLN

I did say *some* colored men, the intelligent, the educated, and veterans, I qualified it.

JAMES ASHLEY

Mr. Stevens is furious, he wants to know why you qualified it -

SCHUYLER COLFAX

No one heard the intelligent or the educated part. All they heard was the first time any president has ever made mention of Negro voting.

LINCOLN

Still, I wish I'd mentioned it in a better speech.

JAMES ASHLEY

Mr. Stevens also wants to know why you didn't make a better speech.

They laugh. There's a knock on the door; Nicolay enters.

JOHN NICOLAY

(to Lincoln:)

Mrs. Lincoln's waiting in the carriage. She wants me to remind you of the hour, and that you'll have to pick up Miss Harris and Major Rathbone.

Lincoln nods. Slade enters with Lincoln's hat, coat, and gloves. Lincoln begins to dress hurriedly.

LINCOLN

Am I in trouble?

WILLIAM SLADE

No, sir.

LINCOLN

Thank you, Mr. Slade.

Slade hands Lincoln his gloves as Colfax and Ashley drain their drinks and rise.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I suppose it's time to go, though I would rather stay.

He leaves the room.

INT. AN EMPTY CORRIDOR, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

On the way out, Lincoln tosses the gloves on a side table. Slade grabs them, considers chasing after Lincoln, then thinks better of it. He walks back towards the office. Then some strange feeling stops him, and he turns around again. Lincoln is walking away, past the petitioners' chairs, down the empty hallway.

Slade watches till Lincoln turns the corner, and he's gone.

INT. A THEATER - NIGHT

The theater is adorned with patriotic bunting.

Onstage, a Caliph's palace. A YOUNG MAN duels with scimitars against a huge, hideous AFRIT. A YOUNG WOMAN in chains cowers in distress. The young man gymnastically avoids being killed, then plunges his scimitar into the afrit's heart. The demon screams and topples to the ground. The audience gasps as a

flame-colored, bejewelled bird rises up from the dead afrit's heart.

The audience applauds. In the center box, Tad Lincoln is joining in, as is his companion for the evening, Tom Pendel.

Onstage, the bird flies off, the young man is freeing the young woman, when the scene is halted by the red curtain lowering, surprising actors and audience. The music dies, the gas lights in the house are being raised as the owner of the theater, LEONARD GROVER, steps out before the curtain and walks to the center of the stage, pale and badly shaken.

In the box, Tom Pendel glances quickly at Tad, who's fixed on the stage, eyes open, alarmed.

The audience knows something's wrong. Their rising murmur of concern dies immediately when Grover raises his hands.

LEONARD GROVER  
(voice shaking:)  
The President has been shot.

There are screams of horror from the audience; people leap from their seats.

LEONARD GROVER (CONT'D)  
The President has been shot at  
Ford's Theater!

The theater is a scene of complete pandemonium. People cry, jam the aisles, call to each other across rows of seats, shout questions at Grover, who's calling for calm, inaudible in the uproar.

Tom Pendel is frozen in shock, then turns to draw Tad close to him. Tad pulls away and begins shrieking, clinging to the railing so tightly that Pendel can't pry him loose. Tad can't stop screaming, his eyes wide open, seeing nothing.

INT. THE BEDROOM IN PETERSON'S BOARDING HOUSE - MORNING

Mary is gently escorted into a tiny room. A small, hissing gas jet in the wall bathes the scene with green light.

Stanton, Speed, GENERAL HENRY HALLECK and a MINISTER, are standing. Welles sits by the head of the bed. DR. CHARLES LEALE, a young army surgeon, and DR. ROBERT STONE, the Lincoln family's doctor, stand uselessly by the foot of the bed, while DR. JOSEPH BARNES, the Surgeon General, listens to Lincoln's faint breathing.

Robert, in uniform, red-eyed, pale as a ghost, sits at the bedside and stares at his father, barely breathing.

Lincoln lies in a crooked diagonal, his knees bent, on a bed he's too tall to fit properly, clad only in a nightshirt.

Barnes moves his head closer, then closer. The room is utterly still. Barnes takes out his watch, looks at the time, softly clears his throat.

DR. BARNES

It's 7:22 in the morning, Saturday  
the 15th of April. It's all over.  
The President is no more.

No one talks, or moves.

Stanton looks at Lincoln's body.

STANTON

Now he belongs to the ages.

Robert begins to weep.

LINCOLN (V.O.)

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we  
pray, that this mighty scourge of  
war may speedily pass away.

EXT. THE EAST PORTICO OF THE CAPITOL - NOON

Lincoln, wearing spectacles, stands at a podium before the Capitol Dome, still under scaffolding, under cloudy skies. He reads from the two pages.

LINCOLN

Yet, if God wills that it continue  
until all the wealth piled by the  
bondman's two hundred and fifty  
years of unrequited toil shall be  
sunk, and until every drop of blood  
drawn with the lash shall be paid  
by another drawn with the sword, as  
was said three thousand years ago,  
so still it must be said "the  
judgments of the Lord are true and  
righteous altogether."

He glances at his audience: 40,000 people from all over the country, wounded soldiers, civilians in black. And for the first time, *in the crowd*, not at its edges, hundreds of African Americans, civilians and soldiers.

## LINCOLN (CONT'D)

With malice toward none, with  
charity for all, with firmness in  
the right as God gives us to see  
the right, let us strive on to  
finish the work we are in, to bind  
up the nation's wounds, to care for  
him who shall have borne the  
battle, and for his widow and his  
orphan, to do all which may achieve  
and cherish a just and a lasting  
peace among ourselves and with all  
nations.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END