



LOVECRAFT



**AMERICA'S
DEMONS
EXPOSED!**

COUNTRY

**EPISODE #105
"STRANGE CASE"**

**WRITTEN BY
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and
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**BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
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**PRODUCTION DRAFT 05/10/19
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PINK REVISION 07/26/19**

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July 26, 2019

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SCRIPT REVISION HISTORY

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CAST LIST

LETI LEWIS

ATTICUS FREEMAN

RUBY BAPTISTE

MONTROSE FREEMAN

CHRISTINA BRAITHWHITE

WILLIAM LOWE

SAMMY

CAPTAIN SEAMUS LANCASTER

DELL/HILLARY DAVENPORT

HANNAH

BURKE

CRANE

TAMARA

STORE OWNER

BLACK TEEN BOY

PAUL HUGHES

BLACK MANAGER

BARB

CATHY

MADGE

BILLIE HOLIDAY

DINAH WASHINGTON

LENA HORNETHE

PD OFFICER #1

PD OFFICER #2

DAWN MEMBER #1

DAWN MEMBER #2

RE-ANIMATED FRANKENSTEIN

SPENCER ALLEN (V.O.)

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SET LIST

INTERIORS

Ardham Lodge
 Grand Hallway
Marshall Field's
 Elevator
 Perfume Counter
 Sales Floor
 Stock Room
Safe Negro Travel
 Garage
William's Mansion
 Bedroom
 Bathroom
 Living Room
Winthrop House
 Dark Room
 Hallway
 Leti's Bedroom
 Bathroom
 Yahima's Room
Sons of Lazarus Lodge
 Hallway
 Kitchen
 Lancaster's Office
 *Closet
 Main Room
Cabrini-Green Apartments
 Hall
 Sammy's Apartment
 Living Room
Bronzeville
 Ritz Pavilion
*(Coffee House - OMIT)
*Ice Cream Parlor

EXTERIORS

Chicago
 Northside
 *(Coffee House - OMIT)
 Park
 Streets
 Marshall Field's
 William's Mansion
 Southside
 Streets
 Denmark Vesey's
 Alley

VEHICLES

*(Buick Skylark Convertible - OMIT)
*Pontiac Star Chief
PD Squad Car

1 **INT. BEDROOM - WILLIAM'S MANSION - DAY**

1

DRIFT across the FRAMES of TAXIDERMIED BUTTERFLIES hanging to find the remnants of a WILD NIGHT -- William's SHIRT and Ruby's RIPPED UNDERWEAR. A WINE GLASS rimmed in LIPSTICK. A GLASS VIAL with a drop of BLOOD RED LIQUID pooled inside.

We're expecting to find Ruby in the bed. After all, the last time we saw her was in flagrante with William, but --

DELL slumbers in the bed alone. *How the hell did she end up here?* She squeezes her eyes shut tighter as SUNLIGHT stabs her in the face. Not ready to confront her MONSTER HANGOVER --

DELL

Fuuuuuuuuuck.

The higher register of her voice confuses her. She CLEARS her throat. Raises her hands to block the blinding sunbeams as she opens her eyes, and -- she SURGES into consciousness as she registers both of her hands are WHITE.

She blinks at the sight. As if she doesn't comprehend what she's seeing. Thinking it's a trick of the light, she rubs her eyes. Looks again at her skin color. Still no change.

Her face turns flush with FEAR. She snatches the sheet back. Desperately inspects her naked body -- it's all WHITE!

She leaps out of the bed, but -- FALLS to the ground on wobbly legs like a newborn gazelle. She gets her bearings. Stumbles to a MIRROR. Recoils from the REFLECTION staring back -- a CRAZED WHITE WOMAN!

She shakes her head. Desperate to awaken from this nightmare --

DELL (CONT'D)

Wake up, Ruby. Wake up!

Hold up. Wait a minute. Did she just call herself Ruby?

SMASH TO TITLES:

L O V E C R A F T C O U N T R Y

2 **EXT. SOUTHSIDE - DAY**

2

Dell/Ruby, heaving, stumbling, hauls ass down a sidewalk. She finally stops. Panting. Catches her white disheveled REFLECTION in a storefront window. Still can't believe it. She TWISTS her mouth. SCRUNCHES her nose. As the reflection APES her every grimace --

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

A BLACK APPARITION comes towards her through the window. STARTLED, she jumps back, but -- it's just the STORE OWNER. He cracks the door. Worried but wary --

STORE OWNER

You lost, Ma'am?

Dell/Ruby knows that tone. It's filled with a level of deference and fear that's only reserved for white people. She's not just imagining this. Others see her white skin.

DELL/RUBY

I'm Ruby Baptiste, I'm....

Head reeling, she backs away. Down the sidewalk. BLACK PEDESTRIANS stare as they hurriedly move out of her way.

DELL/RUBY (CONT'D)

Stop staring at me!

SMACK! She bumps into a BLACK TEEN --

BLACK TEEN

Ma'am...are you okay?

SUDDENLY -- POLICE SIRENS blare as a SQUAD CAR makes a savage U-TURN in the street, screeching to a halt just feet from --

Dell/Ruby and the Teen FREEZE. Instinctively raise their hands in surrender. They both know the black code -- don't give the pigs any reason to arrest you, beat you, or worse.

TWO PD OFFICERS vault out of the car. Rage in their eyes as they clock Dell/Ruby's frayed appearance. PD Officer #1 violently rousts the Black Teen by his collar --

PD OFFICER #1

What did you do to her, boy?

BLACK TEEN

I was trying to help her --

PD Officer #1 roughly SLAMS the Teen to the ground as PD Officer #2 approaches Dell/Ruby like she's precious china --

PD OFFICER #2

Ma'am, it's okay. You're safe now...

His look of CONCERN lands on Dell/Ruby. The cops aren't here to harm her, they're here to protect her. She slowly lowers her hands as she clocks the

ANGRY BLACK LOOKY-LOOS

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2) 2

absorbing this all too familiar scene of brutality as PD Officer #1 thrashes the Teen back and forth --

PD OFFICER #1
Did you molest her?

PD Officer #1 raises his NIGHTSTICK to crack the Teen's skull --

DELL/RUBY
Officer!

PD Officer #1's nightstick hangs as he waits for her to finish her thought. The Looky-Loos eye her with bated breath as well. It takes Dell/Ruby a second to find the words --

DELL/RUBY (CONT'D)
He didn't hurt me. I just got lost.

PD Officer #1 does not take his knee off the Teen's back --

PD OFFICER #1
No need to protect this animal, Ma'am.
If he did something...

DELL/RUBY
I swear. He was trying to help me.

A beat. Then PD Officer #1 disappointedly backs off the scared shitless Teen...

3 **INT. PD SQUAD CAR - DAY** 3

The Officers drive. Dell/Ruby sits quietly. Staring at her white hands. *How in the hell did she end up on the other side of the color line?*

PD OFFICER #1
Your husband's very worried, Ma'am...

That shakes Dell/Ruby out of her head. *Husband?* She glances out the window. Takes in the familiar surroundings with rising TERROR -- they're driving through the lily white neighborhoods of the Northside!

DELL/RUBY
No. You can't take me back there --

PD OFFICER #2
It's okay, Ma'am --

DELL/RUBY
You don't understand, he's not my husband. He did something to me --

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

PD OFFICER #1

He told the operator all about your condition. You just need your pills --

Dell/Ruby tugs on her door handle. It's locked. She slides to the other door and repeats her desperate attempt to escape, but -- she's trapped. White-knuckled PANIC --

DELL/RUBY

Let me out of here --

A SEARING THROB tears through Dell/Ruby's abdomen. She cries out as she clutches her rib cage. Closes her eyes, grimacing in agony. PD Officer #2 eyes her in the rearview mirror --

PD OFFICER #2

Holy shit. I think this is the fits her husband mentioned...

Dell/Ruby's body SPASMS. Her eyes shoot open, wild with pain, and -- one of her BLUE EYES turns back to BROWN!

4 **EXT. WILLIAM'S MANSION - DAY**

4

WILLIAM, looking like the picture perfect husband, rushes to greet the PD Officers as they climb from the squad car --

WILLIAM

I'm so relieved you found her.

PD OFFICER #1

She was 'xactly where you guessed. On the Southside.

William leans in to the squad car -- Dell/Ruby's pressed into the corner of the back seat. RIGID. Face stretched in anguish. She locks BROWN eyes with him. Her sweaty brow is starting to PIMPLE. She eeks out a faint --

DELL/RUBY

...help...

Hard to tell if she's talking to the Officers or William now. He smiles that liquid smile --

WILLIAM

I'm right here, dear...

He gently lifts her from the car. Like a doting husband. Like Prince Charming. She's in too much pain to fight...

5 **INT. WILLIAM'S MANSION - DAY**

5

A PLASTIC TARP is spread open on the floor. William lays Dell/Ruby down on it as an agonized MOAN escapes her lips --

WILLIAM
Stop fighting it. You're only slowing
the process --

Her MOANS grow louder. More guttural. William casually
TURNS UP the volume on his TELEVISION as he disappears into
the kitchen --

SPENCER ALLEN (V.O.)
*...Eight men were arrested yesterday
when fighting broke out between
pickets and non-strikers in front of
the Hawthorne works of Wester Electric
Company, Cermak Road and Cicero
Avenue, Cicero...*

In a last ditch effort to escape, Dell/Ruby flips her stiff
body over. Claws towards the door --

SPENCER ALLEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*More than six hundred tool and die
workers have been on strike there
since June fourteenth...*

SUDDENLY -- she's DRAGGED back to the center of the tarp by
William, who now holds a BUTCHER'S KNIFE.

DELL/RUBY
I don't want to die...

A MELANCHOLY SADNESS cuts through William. He's flashing to
the past -- "going there" -- as he raises the Butcher's Knife --

WILLIAM
He'd say metamorphosis isn't death.

He? Who's he? Before we can really register that, William
plunges the Knife into Dell/Ruby's body, and -- **SAWS!**

On the television, WGN-TV NEWS ANCHOR (SPENCER ALLEN) reports --

SPENCER ALLEN (V.O.)
*...in breaking news, a swarm of
sixteen billion Kenyan locusts are
moving across North Africa, with
Great Britain in its crosshairs...*

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

This dire update provides an eerie soundtrack for Dell/Ruby's hideous and painful TRANSFORMATION that takes place just OUT OF FOCUS in the background --

SPENCER ALLEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...Scientists say, locust nymphs hatch from eggs...

The disgusting WATERY TEARS of Dell/Ruby's flesh. The CRACKING of her bones. The SPATTERING of her bodily fluids.

SPENCER ALLEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And will go through five molting stages... where they shed their skin... and develop their wings...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2) 5

Still out of focus -- the ripped bloody WHITE SKIN that was Dell falls away, revealing RUBY, her body dripping in fluid.

SPENCER ALLEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*After seven days, they reach sexual
maturity as adult locusts... Destined
to devour everything in their path...*

6 **INT. YAHIMA'S ROOM - WINTHROP HOUSE - DAY** 6

MONTROSE sits in the very chair Yahima sat in the night before. His bloodshot eyes transfixed on the DIRT and DRIED BLOOD beneath his fingernails. Yahima's blood.

The room is devoid of any evidence of his crime. No bloody knife. No dead body. The once bloody floor wiped clean. It's as if Yahima never existed. Except in Montrose's eyes. The weight of it will forever live in his eyes.

CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER drifts in. Leti's boarding house is waking up. Montrose stares at the closed door. Braces for --

LETI (O.S.)
...I'll go by the library, pick up
some children's books. Start with
something easy....

ATTICUS and LETI enter, ready to figure out a way to communicate with Yahima, but --

ATTICUS
Pop, what are you doing here?

He remains silent as Leti looks around the spotless room --

LETI
Where's Yahima?

MONTROSE
Gone.

Atticus lasers in on his father's flat affect. His blank stare. The tremors in his hands. And he knows immediately. Leti comes to the only logical conclusion in her mind --

LETI
You just let her walk out of here!?!
How long ago...

She moves to the window. *Could they catch up to her?* Atticus's heart thuds in his chest. The rhythm of rage --

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

ATTICUS
Titus's pages...?

Montrose's silence is the only confirmation he needs to hear --

BAM! Atticus has PUNCHED his father. And does AGAIN and then AGAIN -- *BAM!* For killing Yahima. *BAM!* For being emotionally abusive his whole life. *BAM!* For being responsible for George's death.

Montrose doesn't fight back. Knows he deserves this. And it's swift and brutal and looks as bad as it sounds --

LETI
Atticus -- Stop it! Stop --

She moves to break it up as Montrose falls to the floor but Atticus is on soldier auto-pilot now, his white hot rage is so searing, she thinks twice. Runs out into the hallway --

LETI (CONT'D)
Help. He's gonna kill him --

TWO MALE BOARDERS rush in. It takes both of them to pull Atticus off Montrose --

ATTICUS
Get the fuck off me.

He storms out as Leti tends to his mangled father...

7 **INT. DARK ROOM - WINTHROP HOUSE - DAY**

7

Atticus rips PHOTOS from the line. His fingers smearing BLOOD on them as he scans each picture, one after another. He feels Leti's presence at the top of the stairs. Turns his attention to a stack of developed photos nearby --

ATTICUS
Did you take photos of them?

Leti's half in the doorway. Keeping her distance --

LETI
Of what?

ATTICUS
Titus's pages --

LETI
Tic, I need you to calm down --

He stalks towards her. His eyes like a demon's --

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

ATTICUS

If you took photos, give them to me --

Leti takes a half-step back. Grips something that only Atticus sees. Whatever it is stops him in his tracks.

A mix of emotions compete on Leti's face. But the one floating on top is FEAR. Fear of him. That dampens Atticus's rage. But not completely. So, he storms out.

Leti exhales. Steeled exterior cracking. We finally see what stopped Atticus in his tracks -- she's clenching a BAT!

8 **INT. BEDROOM - WILLIAM'S MANSION - DAY**

8

A now cleaned up Ruby, lies in bed looking serene while she sleeps. William enters post shower. Towel wrapped around his waist. He uses the towel to dry his hair as he gazes at a Frame of Taxidermied Butterflies --

WILLIAM

A caterpillar lives a full life before it dies. Then a butterfly emerges from the same cells. The essence of the caterpillar, yet different, more.

He moves to the GRAND WARDROBE. Begins a METICULOUS DRESSING RITUAL that will continue throughout the following --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I wanted to apply this process of metamorphosis to humans, but my research was all theoretical. Laughed at by the academic community until by chance I met a disgraced professor named Hiram Epstein...

Let that sit. Let it sink in -- William is connected with the ghost Leti exorcised from the Winthrop House!

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

He wanted nothing other than to understand the universe. But it was beyond his reach, so he built doorways. Not scientific mind you, but magical. Though one could argue they're one in the same.

He's got his SUIT on now as he drops his voice to a barely audible whisper. Speaks a few words in the LANGUAGE OF ADAM --

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
*And as the stream of time begins to
slow // Provide me with the capacity
to direct its flow...*

With awe. With reverence. He lets them hang in the air
before he continues to confess to a sleeping Ruby --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Hiram prided himself on collecting
people who saw the world differently,
who didn't fit in their respective
systems. He perhaps should have
been more discerning...

There's more here, but he stops short of revealing it. And
in the stillness of the silence, we hear a PITTER-PATTER --

WILLIAM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
But it was an admirable quality,
worth honoring. Since he introduced
magic into my life, I promised I
would pay it forward when I found
someone worthy enough to share the
gift with...

He sits on the edge of the bed to slide into his polished
wing-tipped SHOES. A beat, then --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I know you're awake, Ruby.

Caught, Ruby opens her eyes to find -- a cloud of REANIMATED
BUTTERFLIES hovering around the room! Some still have the
needles that pinned them to the frames stuck in their bodies.
She has a second of MARVEL, then the FEAR takes back over --

RUBY
Did I die? To turn into that white
woman...

William pulls a vial of BLOOD RED POTION from his suit pocket --

WILLIAM
No. The potion just mimics
metamorphosis. It wears off after a
time.

Ruby tries to process this. Doesn't know if she's buying it --

RUBY
Magic exists...

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

WILLIAM
Does that scare you?

The Reanimated Butterflies fly out the window as Ruby considers that for a long beat, finally --

*
*

RUBY
Scared the shit outta me to wake up white...

She's reluctant to say the next part. William waits. Finally --

RUBY (CONT'D)
But then I was stumbling down the street, disheveled, crazed, screaming at everyone around me, and they weren't scared of me, they were scared for me. They all treated me like...

WILLIAM
...a human being.

That's exactly it. Ruby looks to the Vial in William's hand. He clocks her lingering wariness --

WILLIAM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
I know your transformation was painful --

RUBY
That wasn't pain. That was something else. Like being unmade.

WILLIAM
I promise it'll be easier next time --

RUBY
No. There won't be any "next time" --

William rises. Ignores Ruby's protest completely --

WILLIAM
I have some business to attend to --

RUBY
Am I free to go?

He places the Vial and a wad of CASH on the nightstand --

WILLIAM
You're free to do whatever you please.

They lock eyes for a moment, then William leaves. A beat. Another.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (3) 8

Ruby's trying like hell not to look at the Potion, but she still hasn't moved as the intro from the audio album "**FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE/WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF**" (1976) drifts in --

"Somebody/anybody/sing a black girl's song/bring her out/to know herself/to know you/But sing her rhythms..."

9 **EXT. NORTHSIDE - DAY** 9

"Carin/struggle/hard times/sing her song of life/she's been dead so long/closed in silence so long/she doesn't know the sound/of her own voice..."

Dell/Ruby's heart RACES as she dips her toe into her new white identity. She walks down a crowded street of WHITE PEDESTRIANS striding past her as if she's one of them. Fighting her natural impulse to jump out of their way, but...

She's surprised by the number of White Folks who move out of her way. A SMILE creeps across her face as she relaxes...

10 **OMITTED** 10

11 **INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NORTHSIDE - DAY** 11 *

"Her infinite beauty/she's half-notes scattered/without rhythm/no tune/sing her sighs/sing the song of her possibilities..."

A WHITE MAN hands a VANILLA ICE CREAM CONE across the counter to Dell/Ruby. She opens her purse. Pulls out the wad of cash. The Man waves her off. His smile saying "It's on us"...

12 **EXT. PARK - NORTHSIDE - DAY** 12

"Sing a righteous gospel/the making of a melody/and let her be born/let her be born/& handled warmly..."

Dell/Ruby sits on a park bench. Sun on her face. Enjoying her vanilla cone and a newspaper. She happens upon the "CONFIDENCE GIRL" MOVIE AD, starring HILLARY BROOKE, with a tagline -- 'SHE'LL TAKE YOU FOR ALL YOU'VE GOT... and YOU'LL LOVE IT!'

"I'm outside Chicago/And this is for colored girls who have considered suicide/but are movin to the ends of their own rainbows..."

As Dell/Ruby takes in this personification of confident white womanhood, a colorful BUTTERFLY with a PIN in its wing lands on the edge of her newspaper, and she LAUGHS...

13 **INT. SAFE NEGRO TRAVEL - NIGHT**

13

FIZZZZZZ...white foam coagulates with blood. WIDEN to Atticus glaring at his GASHED KNUCKLES dripping with PEROXIDE as --

SCUFFLE. SCUFFLE. Atticus turns. Surprised to see Leti slipping through the partially open garage door. She locks eyes with him for a long moment. Meaningful and strained.

LETI

I did take photos of the pages. I just didn't have a chance to develop them yet.

She walks over. Sets a FILM CANISTER on the drawing table next to him. Turns to go, but Atticus reaches out. Not for the canister. For Leti's hand. She STILLs at his touch.

ATTICUS

Thank you. For stopping me.

LETI

You should have stopped yourself.

Atticus drops his eyes in shame. Leti swallows hard before --

LETI (CONT'D)

If I wasn't there, would you have killed him?

He looks up at her. His eyes say "yes". And his voice cracks a little, thousands of emotions pushing to the surface --

ATTICUS

I've imagined it enough. Mostly after he would beat me. And that violence in him, that I thought wasn't and could never be in me... I found it in the war. Over there I learned cruelty isn't a personality trait. It's a habit...

Leti's eyes fall to Atticus's busted hand wrapped over hers --

LETI

Seeing that side of you. Scares me.

He looks up at her now. The DESPERATION in his eyes meets the CONFLICTED DOUBT in hers. They stare at each other for a long moment. A charged moment.

He pulls her closer. She leans in. He wraps her in his arms.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

His arms that are capable of violence, but they're capable of this too. Of softness.

ATTICUS

Please don't be scared of me...

Soft, but urgent. And it *lands*, wobbling them both. She kisses him. Lightly at first. But it grows. Both in need of this heat between them.

The moment ignites as they undress each other. He guides her to the couch. Their eyes locked. Naked. Exposed. He's on top of her. Inside of her. With every stroke their connection grows. Deeper until they both climax...

14 **INT. BATHROOM - WILLIAM'S MANSION - NIGHT**

14

Ruby relaxes in a BUBBLE BATH softly singing **ELLA FITZGERALD'S "BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA"**. She dunks underneath the cloud of bubbles. An impromptu baptismal.

She reemerges surprised to find William in the doorway appraising her with an admiring eye.

RUBY

I'm going to need a key.

He raises an eyebrow. *A key, huh?*

RUBY (CONT'D)

I can't exactly stay on the Southside as a white woman, now can I?

That liquid smile comes to William's lips --

WILLIAM

You certainly can't.

RUBY

And let's stop with the bullshit. I'm not buying for a second that I'm special enough for you to share your conjuring powers with. There's a thousand colored girls on the Southside, so why me?

WILLIAM

Why not you?

He moves to the edge of the tub. Holds up the SPONGE. *Shall he?* Ruby leans forward so he can wash her back --

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

The first time I laid eyes on you
was the first time in awhile I've
felt magic where there was none.

If Ruby were her white alter ego right now we'd see the color
in her cheeks. William slides the sponge over her, and
follows it with his hand. She's melting under his electric
touch. This could go somewhere interesting, but --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

And I will need a favor when the
time comes.

RUBY

What kind of favor?

WILLIAM

I have a friend. That I owe --

RUBY

Mob?

WILLIAM

No...a woman friend. Is that a
problem?

RUBY

Might be when I find out what this
favor is.

Not a hint of jealousy from Ruby. William grabs a towel --

WILLIAM

It's small really. Inconsequential.
And until then, you do as you please,
go as please, in whatever skin you
like, and I hope we'll get a chance
to enjoy each other more.

He holds open the towel like the hottest man servant in
history. Ruby contemplates, then steps out of the tub.
Allows William to dry her off.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'm curious, I saw the money I left
still on the nightstand. Why you
didn't spend any of it?

RUBY

Didn't have to.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

RUBY (CONT'D)

I enjoyed my entire day using the only currency I needed -- whiteness. A day without being harassed, beat up, suspected of being a criminal. Just because. That far outweighed any shopping spree...

Ruby wraps the towel around her black body --

RUBY (CONT'D)

I'm not sure what's more difficult. Being colored or being a woman. Most days I'm happy to be both, but the world keeps interrupting. And I'm sick of being interrupted.

William wipes a bead of water from her cheek --

WILLIAM

So what's next for Ruby uninterrupted?

15 **INT. STOCK ROOM - MARSHALL FIELD'S - DAY**

15

Dell/Ruby, dressed like she's on the red carpet of her own movie premiere, with an ELIZABETH TAYLOR CUT & DYE to match, exudes a level of confidence and entitlement that only white privilege can provide as she sits across from the MANAGER (PAUL HUGHES, 40's) leaning on the edge of his desk in his makeshift (shelves packed with STOCK ITEMS for walls) office.

*
*

A recently unboxed, state of the art TELEVISION plays on MUTE as his eyes hopscotch over her Resume --

PAUL

Six typing seminars. Five numbers courses. Maybe I should be worried about you taking my job.

HILLARY

But then who would I learn from?

PAUL

Charming too. That goes a long way 'round here.

An itchy beat. *Is he talking about with him, or in sales?*

PAUL (CONT'D)

Your resume speaks for itself, but tell me what's not on here. Who is Hillary Davenport?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

A made up persona for a black woman Jekyll-and-Hyde-ing as a white woman. But Dell/Ruby aka Hillary can't say that so she looks around the cluttered space for a cover story. Eyes a PHOTO of Paul and his FAMILY in a cape side town --

HILLARY

I'm an imported good. Grew up in a small town in...Maine --

PAUL

Really? What town? I'm from Waterville.

He proudly displays the Photo. Hillary mentally kicks herself. Of all the cape side states she had to pick the one Paul is from.

HILLARY

Oh, it's a tiny town. You probably haven't even heard of it --

PAUL

Try me...

HILLARY

Well, we moved to Chicago after my father died. And my mother was an unlucky fool for love. Over and over again, always getting her heart broken by a new beau with a beautiful smile. And after every break up she would drag me and Leti...

Hillary stops short. Yes, this story she is recounting is her own, but that last line was too much "Ruby" and not enough "Hillary". She recalibrates --

HILLARY (CONT'D)

She would drive my sister and I to Carson's and march up and down the aisles, where the sales clerks would greet us with a smile. It was all that my mother needed to feel whole again...I've always dreamed of being on the other side of the counter to pass on that feeling to a tired, overworked mother.

There it is. The real reason for Ruby's department store dreams. Paul nods as he starts to unwrap a NEW ITEM for his office collection --

*
*

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

PAUL
How do you feel about Coloreds?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

Hillary pales. She's been found out.

PAUL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
You know, working with them.

Hillary relaxes. A small laugh of relief escaping --

HILLARY
You're talking about the Colored gal
out front? As long as she's qualified
and works hard, I don't see a problem
with giving her the same opportunities
that us white folks take advantage
of.

As Paul considers that like it's a completely foreign concept --
Hillary feels a familiar PANG in her stomach. Her heart
starts to RACE. OH SHIT -- she's starting her TRANSFORMATION
in the middle of the interview of her life!

PAUL
Several of my employees quit when
corporate headquarters ended our
whites-only policy.

Hillary grimaces in pain, but Paul misreads it as a reaction
to what he's saying --

PAUL (CONT'D)
But they're no race crusaders. Just
chasing that mighty dollar. How
does assistant manager sound to you?

Hillary's shock momentarily has her forgetting the pain...

HILLARY
Yes. Fourteen times over, yes.

...then she springs up. Needs to get out of here fast --

HILLARY (CONT'D)
Thank you so much, I don't want to
take up anymore of your time --

She grabs her PURSE, but -- Paul pulls her into a HUG!

PAUL
Don't be silly, welcome to the
Marshall Field's family.

She tries to repress her twitching body as he LINGERS just a
bit too long for comfort, then --

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (4) 15

PAUL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Shall we take a tour of the store?

There is no way Hillary's lasting through a tour of the entire store. Her voice CRACKS with tones of Ruby's alto --

HILLARY
First the ladies room --

She dashes out as Paul notices something she's dropped --

PAUL
Ms. Davenport, you dropped your...

He picks up the VIAL of BLOOD RED POTION. Inspects it --

PAUL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Perfume...?

16 **INT. MARSHALL FIELD'S - DAY** 16

Panicked, on the move, Hillary digs through her Purse. Looking for the vial of potion. She can't find it.

She races to the ELEVATOR. Punches the button. Another wave of anguish sweeps through her body. She groans. Grabs the wall for purchase. She's only seconds away from turning back into Ruby. But she can't do it here.

DING! The elevator opens. Hillary rushes inside, and as the doors slide close -- just a GLIMPSE of her hideous transformation as her WHITE SKIN SPLITS OPEN, and -- the elevator doors SLAM shut. As Ruby's SCREAMS echo...

17 OMITTED 17
THRU 17
19 THRU 19

A20 **EXT. CABRINI-GREEN APARTMENTS - NIGHT** A20

The towering brick edifice looms over the Southside...

B20 **INT. HALL - CABRINI-GREEN APARTMENTS - NIGHT** B20

Montrose stands at a door. His face BATTERED by his son's hands -- contused cheek, busted lip, bloodshot eye. He's wrestling with himself. Whatever's on the other side of this door he needs. But he can't bring himself to knock.

The door opens, REVEALING -- SAMMY the bartender!

There's no surprise in Sammy's eyes, Montrose's mangled face embodies the life for Colored homosexual men in 1955 --

B20 CONTINUED:

B20

SAMMY

Was it the ofays or the niggers this time?

C20 **INT. LIVING ROOM - SAMMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

C20

Montrose walks inside without a word. Sammy goes to close the door, but Montrose slams it shut instead. Pushes Sammy against it. The men lock eyes. Longing and desire flares --

Montrose aggressively snatches Sammy's pants down. Flips him around and pulls down his own pants. Spits on his hand. Lubes up his dick, and -- forcefully enters Sammy from behind.

Sammy exhales with pleasure. This is hard, violent, thrilling fucking. With every thrust, they find themselves deeper in rapture. Montrose leans in and lustily bites Sammy on the neck as he orgasms.

A beat of heavy breathing. Sammy turns in his sometime lover's arms. Gently presses his forehead against Montrose's. Montrose holds on to him as if they are the last two people on earth. Sammy's lips tip to Montrose's for a kiss, but --

Montrose pulls away.

That level of intimacy a step too far for him. As he drops to his knees, going down on Sammy, the bartender leans his head against the front door, clearly this is a broken record that he continues to try and play...

*
*
*

20 **INT. MARSHALL FIELD'S - DAY**

20

Bustling with CUSTOMERS as a PIANO PLAYER tickles out "MELODY IN F". Hillary steps onto the sales floor. Adjusts her name tag, "HILLARY DAVENPORT, ASSISTANT MANAGER". She breathes in her dream and it smells like pure Americana.

*
*
*

Paul walks up. Takes her hand. Kisses it --

PAUL

My lips aren't necessarily the Blarney Stone, but here's hoping good luck rubs off on you your first day.

Hillary smiles at her manager, but this level of attention raises her antenna. As he moves off, she notices TAMARA rushing back to her unmanned perfume counter. Heads over --

HILLARY

You can't uplift the lives of our customers if you're not at your counter, Tamara --

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

She relishes how the black counter girl nervously straightens up the Lipstick Display --

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

TAMARA

So sorry, Ms. Davenport. Was only supposed to be gone for a couple of minutes. Madge needed some shoes reshelved. But then Barb needed her dressing rooms wiped down and Cathy --

HILLARY

Tamara?

TAMARA

Yes, Ma'am.

HILLARY

Exhale. You're not in any trouble. I just like to get to know all my employees. I remember you saying you applied on a whim...

TAMARA

I'm sorry, did I say that to you...?

That's right, she said that to Ruby. Hillary pivots --

HILLARY

Mr. Hughes must have mentioned it. He also told me your hiring caused a stir. I hope you're still feeling a part of the Marshall Field's family...

TAMARA

I am, Ma'am.

A stock answer. Tamara's wary of this white woman's intentions. Hillary considers her for a beat, then --

HILLARY

That's great. And remember no matter what anybody says, they can't take your educational achievements away from you.

TAMARA

You sound like my mother. But I wouldn't call a seventh grade education much of an achievement.

Hillary attempts to swallow her surprise --

HILLARY

You didn't graduate from high school? So you took some accounting courses down at the Frederick Douglass Center?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (3)

20

TAMARA

I didn't even know they had those there...

...so how the hell do you? But Hillary is too busy having her theory of the "exceptional negro" shattered --

HILLARY

Then you must have worked at some colored boutiques on the Southside?

TAMARA

No, Ma'am.

Hillary smiles through gritted teeth. Wildly annoyed. She notices Tamara's hands. Slides over the Revlon DISPLAY LOTION --

HILLARY

Your hands are a bit ashy.

As Tamara applies Lotion to her hands, feeling smacked...

21 **INT. STOCK ROOM - MARSHALL FIELD'S - DAY**

21

A freshly unboxed AM RADIO plays a TOP 40 STATION as Hillary stands by the cracked door. Her eyes periodically glance to the wall clock.

She's reticent to join the fun that her WHITE COWORKERS (MADGE, CATHY, & BARB (20's-30's)) have orchestrated in her honor. They're baptizing the "new girl" in how they do things. They've opened a new SHIPMENT --

BARB stumble-struts as she models the newest footwear sensation -- a "Heeled Opera Shoe" (aka STILETTOS), CATHY tries on a svelte LEATHER JACKET, and MADGE spins in a FUR COAT while eating CHOCOLATE COVERED CHERRIES --

CATHY

Madge, you look like Marilyn Monroe in "How to Marry a Millionaire."

Madge throws this to Hillary --

MADGE

Cathy's always too afraid of hurting someone's feelings. Barb, which way's the wind blowing?

BARB

That coat would close if you stopped stuffing your face with Bons-Bons.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

MADGE

So I don't look like Marilyn Monroe?

The Girl's LAUGH. Hillary half joins in. Can't quite participate. Torn between making friends and her dream job --

HILLARY

It's been thirty minutes. We should really get back on the floor.

The Girls touch eyes. Conspiring in a glance --

BARB

Well Hillary you're the boss. So you can either order us back out there to the salt mines or...

Cathy holds out a pair of BLACK STILETTOS --

CATHY

...you can try on these naughty Stilettos and live a fucking little.

Madge nudges Hillary over to a chair. Plops her down in it. As Cathy and Barb slide her practical work shoes off --

HILLARY

Speaking of boss, has Paul...ever gotten fresh with any of you?

Madge, Barb, and Cathy HOWL --

MADGE

Paul "I live in a Norman Rockwell painting with my wife and two kids" getting fresh? No way!

BARB

Like my father aways says...
(mimicking her father:)
"Boy, is paranoia the price of being a working girl in America."

Hillary forces a smile to dispel her worry as they slide the Stilettos onto her feet. She bites her lip, letting out a moan of pleasure. They feel like silk.

MADGE

Come on, let us see you strut...

LITTLE RICHARD'S "TUTTI FRUTTI" screams as Cathy turns up the Radio. As Hillary struts, she relaxes her stiff, rehearsed "dainty white woman" demeanor, swinging her hips --

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

CATHY
Woowee!

MADGE
Cut a rug!

Hillary LAUGHS, finally enjoying herself. The Girls marvel --

MADGE (CONT'D)
You should sign up for Herb Mintz's
show.

CATHY
With the rhythm in those hips, she's
ready for the Colored version.

BARB
Okay, can I just say what we've all
been thinking? I hope we don't see
any more Tamara's coming through the
front door.

Hillary sashays and twirls, but still offers commentary --

HILLARY
If there are, let's hope they'll be
more qualified than her.

BARB
Of course she's unqualified. She's
a Negro --

MADGE
Barb...

Hillary catches herself now. Remembering who she really is.
A Negro woman masquerading as a white woman.

BARB
What? I was polite enough not to
use the less civilized word.

MADGE
Hillary, you were with Tamara earlier.
You seem comfortable with her --

HILLARY
I was just giving her work advice...

CATHY
You think you can convince her to
take us to a bar on the Southside?
It'll be like a safari, and we need
a guide --

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (3) 21

The Girls CACKLE like shattered glass. Hillary does her best to swallow the liberal racism --

HILLARY
Why would you want to go there?
There's nothing special about the
Southside, trust me I know.

The Girl's clutch their pearls over Hillary's declaration --

MADGE
You've been there?

CATHY
Oh my god! Were you scared
being around all those --

HILLARY
People?

She's doing her best to mask her disgust now, but the Girl's are too excited to even notice...

22 **EXT. MARSHALL FIELD'S - DAY** 22

End of the work day. Hillary exits with the Girls as an exhausted Tamara trails behind them. She watches Tamara head down the street alone. The only black face in a sea of white. As Ruby ruminates on tokenism in her white body --

BARB
Whatta' hunk-a-man.

Hillary turns, surprised to find the Girls are swooning over William leaning on his PONTIAC STAR CHIEF looking like a dream. That liquid smile aimed right at her. *

MADGE (CONT'D)
He's with you?

HILLARY
Only when he behaves.

The Girls barely contain giggles as they peel off --

WILLIAM
Night. Night, ladies.

HILLARY
You can't just be showing up here --

WILLIAM
Doesn't look like I embarrassed you.

He leans in to kiss her. But Hillary turns her cheek, rejecting his advance. He doesn't miss a beat --

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
How was the first day of your dream
job, Ms. Davenport?

Hillary sighs unenthusiastically --

HILLARY
It's better than being someone's
damn chair-woman.

She leans against the Pontiac, pulling a COMPACT to re-apply
her lipstick. She knows William's watching her. The air
between them hot and growing thicker --

*

WILLIAM
You don't want me to kiss you as
Hillary.

HILLARY
Do you want to kiss Hillary?

WILLIAM
I want to kiss whatever you want me
to.

That brings a tiny smile to Hillary's lips, but she hides
it. Pulls a POTION VIAL from her purse --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Hold off on that. I need that favor
tonight.

HILLARY
Finally, the devil tells me what
deal I've made with him.

WILLIAM
I need you to attend a party. Ms.
Braithwhite will give you the rest
of the details once you're there.

Hillary shifts uncomfortably. *The other woman.* William
touches her arm. Bringing her back to him and this moment --

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
There's a box in the back seat with
your name all over it.

Hillary grabs the LUXURIOUS GIFT BOX out of the back seat.
Intrigued. Unwraps it, and is highly disappointed to find --
a vintage red-wine colored MAID'S UNIFORM...

23 OMITTED

23

24 **INT. MAIN ROOM - SONS OF LAZARUS LODGE - NIGHT**

24

Ruby wears the maid's uniform and a SCOWL as she carries a tray of deviled eggs through a sea of STUFFY OLD WHITE MEN, catching snippets of CONVOS --

STUFFY OLD MEN (V.O.)
You could view the Captain's accomplishments as a way to immortality... We suffered a major loss in the Ardhm accident, but initiation must remain exclusive... Perhaps he's recovered Horatio's lost pages...

As she stops at a group that includes LANCASTER in a CHEAP SUIT a size-and-a-half too small, we realize she's serving ORDER OF ANCIENT DAWN MEMBERS along with other BLACK FEMALE SERVANTS. The Members, who all wear their SIGNET RINGS, graze on hors d'oeuvres and sip cocktails.

Lancaster's ring finger is noticeably EMPTY. But he's schmoozing his hardest to change that as he brags in code for the benefit of Ruby and the other server's ears --

LANCASTER
It was a unanimous decision from the members that I take the reigns of our "social club".

DAWN MEMBER #1
What of the rumors of defection following Hiram's death?

DAWN MEMBER #2
Mister Lowe was certainly unexpected --

LANCASTER
There were some who abandoned us, but look around, that has only made our brotherhood stronger.

Ruby moves on, not really absorbing anything she's hearing...

25 **INT. KITCHEN - SONS OF LAZARUS LODGE - NIGHT**

25

Ruby SLAMS her tray on the counter startling the BLACK COOKS. Rips off her apron. So done with serving white folks --

RUBY
Where is this bitch?

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

CHRISTINA (O.S.)

Right here.

Ruby whips around, taking in Christina standing in the open doorway. The two women size each other up. There's a sense of FAMILIARITY. And mutual admiration. Ruby shakes off the confusing feeling --

*
*

RUBY

You were supposed to be here an hour ago.

CHRISTINA

William does like a demanding woman.

Ruby sidesteps the conversation about their mutual lover --

RUBY

What do you need me to do here?

Christina pulls a BUTTERFLY TALISMAN. Hands it to Ruby --

CHRISTINA

It's simple really. Just hide this in the police captain's office --

RUBY

Captain!?! William never said anything about fucking cops. You're trying to get me killed --

She shoves the Talisman back at Christina. Moves to leave, but Christina grabs her arm TIGHTLY --

CHRISTINA

Do you care for him at all? Beyond the opportunity he's providing you?

*

Ruby doesn't answer that. But it's in her eyes. She cares. And she would never admit it, but with Christina's hand on her, something passes between them, some kind of heat.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

William is the rightful heir to this lodge. The Captain tried to kill him to take his seat. Shot him in the back and dumped his body in the river like he was a piece of trash.

Ruby REACTS. Anger surfacing on behalf of her new lover. Christina nods. A flicker of pain in her eyes --

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)
Lancaster believes he succeeded, but
William survived with my help. And
with yours, he'll have his revenge.

Ruby looks to the Talisman in Christina's hands, still wary --

RUBY
Will that kill him?

Christina's eyes bore into Ruby. Unsettling her. For a
split second, she senses just how dangerous this woman is.
As she considers taking the talisman...

*
*
*

26 **INT. ARDHAM LODGE - DAY**

26 *

The roar of rushing FLAMES crash over us like a wave. The
world is on FIRE. FLAMES lick the walls around Atticus as
he stands in the middle of the grand hallway staring at his
pregnant great-great-great-great grandmother

HANNA

in the doorway in the distance. Standing straight backed
and proud like the moment before she disappeared in 102.
But this time, she MOUTHS something Atticus cannot hear.

Something IMPORTANT.

He strains to make out what his ancestor is saying to him.
Tries to move closer, but the Flames leap onto him. As he's
ENGULFED, his face contorting in PAIN --

27 **INT. DARK ROOM - WINTHROP HOUSE - NIGHT**

27

Atticus wakes. Haunted. On the table before him -- PHOTOS
of TITUS'S PAGES, a TRANSLATION GRID with PHONETIC
PRONUNCIATIONS scratched in pencil, and his SIGNET RING. As
the soup clears, he notices Leti hanging photos to dry --

ATTICUS
Shit. How long was I out?

She clocks his face. Ashen. The nightmare still fresh.
Moves to him. Comforting him with her touch --

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

LETI

Not long. Thought I'd let you sleep since you've been going non-stop.

He wraps his arms around her as they eye his unfinished work --

LETI (CONT'D)

Looks like the Little Orphan Annie radio puzzles I used to do when I was younger. But I'm guessing this is a little more complicated.

Atticus holds up his SIGNET RING --

ATTICUS

Figured I'd start with what's in my arsenal. It's engraved with my initials in the Language of Adam...

Leti inspects the ENGRAVING --

LETI

"A" "F" and....

ATTICUS

"S". For Samson. My grandfather on my mother's side.

Leti picks up a close-up PHOTO of "PROTECTION" scribbled under the LANGUAGE OF ADAM HEADER --

LETI

With the word for protection we've got eleven letters out of twenty-six. That's not bad.

ATTICUS

That's if the Language of Adam is analogous to English...

He pulls a PHOTO of the SYMBOL at the top of Titus's pages --

ATTICUS (CONT'D)

This looks like some kind of symbol. Appears in the body of text as well. Which would suggest it might be similar to Chinese hieroglyphics.

Leti absorbs that. Daunted by the task at hand --

LETI

This would have been a lot easier with Yahima's help.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

The mention of the dead two-spirit shadows Atticus's features.
He separates from Leti as she presses on --

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (3)

27

LETI (CONT'D)

But I understand why your father let her go. Keeping her against her will would have made us no better than Titus.

ATTICUS

Yeah...

He's protecting his father on instinct even now. Leti tries to shake off the momentary funk, heading for the stairs --

LETI

I'll make us some coffee...

ATTICUS

My pop didn't let Yahima go.

The weight in his voice stops Leti. She turns back.

ATTICUS (CONT'D)

My whole life, if he didn't want me to do something he'd do his damndest to destroy it in my eyes...

Leti just stares. Not ready to accept what he might be saying --

LETI

Tic, what does that mean...

ATTICUS

Titus's pages weren't the only thing he got rid of...

She absorbs that. It's in her eyes...sudden understanding --

LETI

How could he...

ATTICUS

He probably thought he was keeping me safe by destroying everyone's access to more magic.

Leti's reeling as she looks over the photos of Titus's pages. A dry swallow, then --

LETI

This, all this is evil. It's corrupting us...

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (4)

27

ATTICUS

No. It's not inherently evil. It's what we do with it that matters. And what we want to do? Protecting ours? How can that ever be bad...

LETI

Look what your father did to protect you.

That's a hard pill to swallow. And the truth is --

ATTICUS

Maybe he's been right all along. Maybe I should stop digging into magic and the Sons of Adam. Every time I push further into their world, someone dies...

That hangs. Grows thick as Leti fails to protest...

28 **INT. HALLWAY - SONS OF LAZARUS LODGE - NIGHT**

28

Ruby, tray of food in hand, keeps a watchful eye over her shoulder as she casually makes her way towards Lancaster's office. She slows as she clocks a PHOTO on the wall of the "SOCIAL CLUB" MEMBERS -- at the center of it is William!

He's a bit younger, and a whole lot geekier looking in the photo. Ruby stares at it, trying to reconcile this boy with the handsome man she knows.

LAUGHTER coming her way jolts her out of the moment. She quickly slips into...

29 **INT. LANCASTER'S OFFICE - SONS OF LAZARUS LODGE - NIGHT**

29

...and shuts the door tight behind her. She sets her food tray on the desk. Takes the Talisman from her apron. Hides it deep inside the top drawer.

Sensing something, she pauses -- SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH.

It's coming from the CLOSET. Neither frantic nor forceful, but constant quiet probing. SCRATCH. SCRA -- It stops.

Against her better judgement, Ruby makes her way over to the closet, cracks it open to discover -- a disfigured WHITE RE-ANIMATED FRANKENSTEIN with a BLACK THROAT chained inside!

Ruby recoils. Horrified and overtaken by the stench. He/It reaches toward her. Opens his mouth to speak. Nothing but grotesque fluids run out because he/it doesn't have a tongue --

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

RE-ANIMATED FRANKENSTEIN
Heeeellllpppp meeeee...

Ruby makes for the door, but -- FOOTSTEPS. Someone's coming. *FUCK! What does she do now?* She has no choice, she grabs her tray, and -- DUCKS into the closet with the Frankenstein!

The door swings open, and -- an annoyed Lancaster, BURKE and CRANE in tow, loosens his tie in frustration as he enters --

LANCASTER
I'm dancing out there like a fucken monkey for what? A goddamn ring. Get me another shirt from the closet...

An itchy beat as Burke moves for the closet, and we PUSH through the door...

A30 **INT. CLOSET - LANCASTER'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

A30

...to find Ruby, one hand clamped over Frankenstein's mouth to keep him from squealing, and one hand over her mouth and nose to shield the awful stench. ANXIETY skyrockets as she watches Burke approach through the slats --

CRANE (O.S.)
Here you go, boss...

B30 **INT. LANCASTER'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

B30

Crane grabs a PRESSED SHIRT from a hook behind the door, which thankfully, stops Burke from opening the closet.

CRANE
And the dusty ole' farts would be lucky to have someone who has their wits 'bout 'dem the way you do...

Lancaster removes his sweat-stained shirt, REVEALING -- he has a BLACK TORSO, Frankenstien-stitched at the neck & waist!

LANCASTER
It's going to take Horatio's pages to get me in. Where're we on Kentucky...?

He pulls open his top drawer. DIGS inside. *Shit...is he going to find the Talisman?*

*

(CONTINUED)

B30 CONTINUED:

B30

BURKE

I convinced the county sheriff that
it was in their best interest to
protect the Winthrop Observatory
from possible vandals.

(CONTINUED)

B30 CONTINUED: (2) B30

Lancaster's hand lands on what he's looking for -- a bottle of COLOGNE. As he sprays himself heavily to cover up the smell of his dead torso -- *

LANCASTER
Good. If that bleeding-cunt Christina is after the orrery, we'll let her bring it right to us.

SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH. The men glance to the closet. And we PUSH through the door...

C30 **INT. CLOSET - LANCASTER'S OFFICE - NIGHT** C30

...to find Ruby still has a hand over Frankenstein's mouth, but now she has the other clamped around his hand to keep him from scratching more.

CRANE (O.S.)
Has Zenone dropped a dime on the location of the loot he stole?

Ruby GAGS. Pulls her hand away from Frankenstein's mouth to cover hers on instinct. Fighting her vomit reflex.

LANCASTER (O.S.)
Not yet. But he'll talk soon enough. The dead always do...

Frankenstein opens his mouth exposing the tongueless void. As Ruby pleads with her eyes. *Please, don't give me up...*

30 OMITTED 30
AND AND
31 31

32 **INT. SALES FLOOR - MARSHALL FIELD'S - DAY** 32

Still haunted by her gruesome discovery last night, Hillary takes out her frustration on Tamara as the black counter girl attempts to organize the new "Heeled Opera Shoe" display --

HILLARY
You can't position the heel away from the customer's eye line -- we might as well be selling wedges.

Tamara rushes to correct her "mistake" but Hillary remains relentless. Even garnering the attention of CUSTOMERS --

HILLARY (CONT'D)
No, no, no! That's all wrong.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

HILLARY (CONT'D)

You have to put the white heels with the monochromatic dresses. It's the way to appeal to our upmarket clientele.

She storms toward Tamara, snatching the HEELS. Tamara is trying to keep herself in check, but she's heated --

TAMARA

Don't want to be disrespectful, but I'm doing my best here, Ma'am.

HILLARY

Well, your best isn't good enough. You want to be a credit to your race? Then you have to be better than mediocre, Tamara. And do you want to know why?

Before Tamara can respond, Hillary answers herself --

HILLARY (CONT'D)

Because white folks are even more fucked up than you think they are. They've got shit that you can't even imagine. I've seen it.

Tamara is confused. Hillary's also white. But Hillary continues, in the manic phase of her shock --

HILLARY (CONT'D)

That's why you gotta be exponentially better than them just so you don't end up in some closet, half dead with your tongue cut out --

PAUL (O.S.)

Ms. Davenport...?

Hearing Paul call her by her white name snaps Hillary out of her rant. As she collects herself he approaches --

PAUL (CONT'D)

Is everything okay over here?

HILLARY

We're fine. In fact, Tamara was just promising to take all of us to the Southside tonight. Where we can let our hair down. Right, Tamara?

Tamara's tongue-tied. Can't refuse her white bosses...

33 **INT. DENMARK VESEY'S - SOUTHSIDE - NIGHT**

33

Packed with BLACK PATRONS imbibing and cutting a rug on the dance floor to the live music being performed by Ruby's band.

Hillary, Paul, Madge, Barb, and Cathy -- the only white faces in the place -- are seated at the best table in the house with their token Tamara.

BARB

This band is just so...groovy!

Hillary clocks the Black Patrons whispering to each other and cutting looks at Tamara. *How dare she bring these crackers to their place.*

HILLARY

Yep. Groovy.

The BLACK MANAGER arrives and distributes everyone SHOTS --

HILLARY (CONT'D)

We didn't order these --

BLACK MANAGER

They're on the house. Just make sure you tell more of your friends to come on out to Denmark's. Our doors are open to every color!

Hillary rolls her eyes at the VIP treatment as he peels off. Cathy hops up and pulls Tamara out of her seat --

CATHY

Come on, Tam! Show us how to do the Bunny Hop Mambo.

Barb, Madge, and Paul stand --

PAUL

Are you coming Hillary?

Hillary raises her half full glass with a tight smile --

HILLARY

I'll be right behind.

She watches her companions hit the dance floor with barely veiled disgust -- the Girls find eager BLACK MEN to gyrate on as Paul tries to stay on beat with "Tam", who's struggling to perform her token role...

34 **INT. LIVING ROOM - SAMMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

34

Fierce DRAG QUEENS -- including three that look remarkably like LENA HORNE, DINAH WASHINGTON, and BILLIE HOLIDAY -- squeeze into GIRDLES. Adjust WIGS. And jostle for views of their exquisite SEQUINED GOWNS in a full-length mirror.

Sammy, in a SLIP and FULL MAKEUP, applies CONCEALER to Montrose's bruised face. They're in a world of their own, barely listening to the running commentary --

LENA (O.S.)
...Look at Mother over there, paintin'
with those bright ass colors like
she's Archibald Motley...

Sammy gently sweeps a FOUNDATION BRUSH across his sometime lover's bruised forehead, cheeks, and nose.

DINAH (O.S.)
Well, the look in Sugar Ray Robinson's
eyes says they're goin' to be cookin'
later tonight. See a quiet man will
tell you all you need to know with
his eyes...

Sammy lightly shadows Montrose's eyelids.

BILLIE (O.S.)
Not just his eyes, but with somethin'
else too.

The Queens cackle as Sammy carefully highlights Montrose's swollen cheeks with BLUSH.

LENA (O.S.)
Y'all two finally together or what?

DINAH (O.S.)
Together? Girl, they haven't even
smacked lips yet.

BILLIE (O.S.)
Maybe the fighter is afraid to get
lipstick on them juicy lips of his.

LENA (O.S.)
I don't see how, they got that new
smudge proof Revlon stick so nobody
will know where you been.

Sammy makes the final touches to Montrose's cuts with POWDER.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

DINAH

Clearly Sugar Ray don't care nothin'
about markin' Mother's neck, so
everybody can know where he been!

Sammy instinctively touches the MONKEY BITE on his neck as
the Queens cackle --

SAMMY

Shut the hell up. Y'all hens wouldn't
have nothing to cluck about if you
had some cock-a-doodle-doo's pecking
in your own coops.

Montrose half-smiles in spite of himself as Sammy pirouettes
to the center of the apartment's festive scene and CLAPS --

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Mother beckons, Bitches!

The Queens rush to Sammy's side and separate into their
preassigned tasks -- Lena helps Sammy with his wig placement,
while Dinah and Billie get his stockings on and dress zipped. *

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Sassy Sarah Vaughn's got something
in store for the masses tonight.

Montrose takes a sip from his FLASK as he watches Sammy.

BILLIE

Hopefully something good.

SAMMY

Good? It's ripped from the headlines
gravitas.

(sarcastic British
accent:)

Fresh from ravaging the shores of
Great Britain, a savage Africanized
cicada is poised to take over the
world... leading a 'drag swarm' to
lay waste to Chicago's most lavish
of balls tonight...

He breaks away from his drag helpers to DANCE in front of
Montrose, arching his back and fanning his arms with panache
and grace --

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Featuring a never before seen dance
called "Locusta Migratoria."

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2) 34

As Montrose watches his sometimes lover dance for him...

35 **EXT. ALLEY - DENMARK VESEY'S - NIGHT** 35

Hillary hides in an entryway. QUAKING. Covering her mouth to muffle the moans. Staring at her REFLECTION in a PUDDLE. She's holding a potion vial. But isn't taking it. She wants to feel the pain of her transformation. *

This is the first time we will see the entire METAMORPHOSIS --

Hillary's forehead bubbles, her white skin SPLITS open from her forehead and, like an earthquake cracking open the surface of the earth, the FISSURES run down her entire body.

She bites her tongue to keep from wailing. Squeezes the Potion Vial so hard it POPS. She PEELS BACK her white skin as her rib-cage and pelvic bones CRACK and READJUST, and -- Ruby fully emerges from her white cocoon!

Relishing the physical torment of her transformation, she pulls on her TRENCH COAT, kicks her shed skin into the shadows -- *

KABOOM! A trash can being KNOCKED OVER. A MUFFLED ARGUMENT reaches Ruby's ears. She peeks through the fence -- *

Down the alley, Paul's got Tamara in his clutches. This is not the kind, sweet, but annoying Paul we've gotten to know. This is Hyde. Tamara struggles --

TAMARA

Mr. Hughes, please sir, I don't want to do this --

PAUL

Just let me smell it. Heard you girls smell sweet down there.

Ruby's conflicted. *Should she intervene?* Paul kisses Tamara against her will. Forcing his hand up her skirt. She BITES him. He pulls away in shock as she slips back into Denmark's --

PAUL (CONT'D)

You nigger bitch.

He tastes the blood on his lip. Can feel eyes on him. He looks up, locking eyes with Ruby --

PAUL (CONT'D)

What the hell are you looking at?

Ruby backs away and runs as the AUDIO from **MALCOLM X'S SPEECH, 'WHO TAUGHT YOU TO HATE YOURSELF?'** plays --

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 35

"The most disrespected woman in America is the black woman..."

36 **INT. RITZ PAVILION - BRONZEVILLE - NIGHT** 36

DRIFT THROUGH the hot, sweaty, kinetic BRONZEVILLE CROWD -- a sea of DRAG QUEENS, in colorful evening gowns, satin slippers, French heels, silken hose, gracefully displayed tiaras, feathered fans, and flashing jewelry.

"The most un-protected person in America is the black woman..."

A reserved TENNILLE (Montrose's drag alter-ego) watches Sammy enact a pantomime of precision -- DANCING, PRANCING, and REGALING in replete "Sassy Sarah Vaughn" splendor with a flare of his new groove "The Locust" thrown in for good measure...

"The most neglected person in America, is the black woman..."

Tennille observes with pride as the CROWD cheers for Sammy. The BALLROOM JUDGES present him with a 2ND PLACE SASH and large silver TIARA...

"And as Muslims, the honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us to respect our women, and to protect our women..."

The clean and coiffed CONDUCTOR leads the BIG BAND. Sammy pulls Tennille to the middle of the dance floor. Digs his polished fingernails into Tennille's back as he GRINDS on him with a mixture of hunger and capitulation. Tennille doesn't resist. They have done this dance scores of times...

"And the only time a Muslim gets real violent, is when someone goes to molest his woman..."

Tennille finds his emotional defenses melting due to the soul moving music, the contagious bliss of the crowd, and Sammy's relentless affection. He steps back from his sometimes lover and SPINS in a circle of one...

"We will kill you, for our women I'm making it plain yes, we will kill you for our women..."

Tennille SPINS and SPINS and SPINS. Letting the music overtake his spirit. He sheds a single TEAR. Then another. Soon a torrent of teardrops cascade down his face as years of guilt, anger, and shame stream from his eyes...

"We believe that if the white man, will do whatever is necessary to see that his woman get respect and protection, then you and I will never be recognized as men..."

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 36

Sammy pulls Tennille back in. Wiping the tears from his cheeks. And he's surprised when -- Tennille KISSES him! *

"Until we stand up like men and pay the same penalty over the head of anyone, who puts his filthy hands out, to put it in a direction of our women..."

The lovers break away from each other. EXHILARATED. Tennille wipes Sammy's lipstick from his mouth. Looks down at his hand and LAUGHS, long and deep... *

37 **INT. LIVING ROOM - WILLIAM'S MANSION - NIGHT** 37

Ruby sits at the table. Trembling. Purse turned upside down. Among the spilled contents -- TEN VIALS of POTION. Her entire supply. Seven of those vials are empty. Beneath her chair, a pile of SKIN that she's shed.

She's on a painful transmogrified bender.

The basement door opens. Out walks Christina, who uses a key to lock it behind her. Ruby looks up at her --

RUBY
You're not William.

CHRISTINA
No. I'm not.

RUBY
That's the only door in the house that's locked. What's down there?

Christina eyes the shed skin as she sits across from Ruby --

CHRISTINA
I guess Ruby got interrupted again.

Ruby takes a beat. Knows Christina's changing the subject from the locked basement door, but this stings --

RUBY
He told you about that.

Christina takes Ruby in. She's so vulnerable in this moment --

CHRISTINA
I've been where you are.
Disillusioned. Pissed. Disgusted
with a world not built for me --

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

RUBY

Please shut the fuck up. You can't relate to who I am. I've spent enough time on your side of the color line to know the only thing you white women are disillusioned with is yourselves.

CHRISTINA

You're right. We want to be you and you want to be us. Who's the bigger fool? In this case, you are.

Ruby's eyes flare in anger, but before she can retort --

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

You misunderstood William's invitation. It wasn't just to be white. It was an invitation to do whatever the fuck you want. That's the currency of magic. Unmitigated freedom. Stop being stifled by their rules and create your own.

Christina pushes one of the potion vials to Ruby --

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

Who are you really uninterrupted?

As Ruby absorbs Christina's challenge, her eyes catching fire with a devilish spark...

38 **INT. STOCK ROOM - MARSHALL FIELD'S - DAY**

38

The TV plays the **1955 CLIMAX THEATRE EPISODE of DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE** on MUTE as Paul works at his desk. He looks up with a smile as Hillary struts in wearing STILETTO HEELS and carrying a DESIGNER COAT with the tags still on --

*
*

HILLARY

Do you have a second to discuss an important employee matter?

PAUL

Your timing couldn't be more perfect. I'd like to run something by you as well. But ladies first.

HILLARY

Always a gentleman.

Hillary hangs the Designer Coat up as she scans to make sure they're alone. After a dramatic pause --

*
*

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

HILLARY (CONT'D)
I'm giving you my notice.

Paul leaps out of his chair, flabbergasted --

PAUL
You're quitting. Why? Look, if
this is about money --

HILLARY
It's about you, Mr. Hughes --

PAUL
Me?

She turns up the VOLUME on the TV, getting conspiratorial --

HILLARY
Since the moment we met, I've been
attracted to you. And honestly,
I've been doing my best to remain
professional...

She closes the distance between them. Her energy dominating --

HILLARY (CONT'D)
And as your subordinate, I would
never allow my licentious ways to
jeopardize your reputation with the
company. Quitting is the only
option...so I can finally fuck your
brains out.

Paul is speechless. But his BULGE speaks for itself. She
KISSES him like she owns him, then --

HILLARY (CONT'D)
You're always in control, aren't you
Mr. Manager? You don't mind if I
take control for a little while...?

He enthusiastically nods his head. He doesn't mind that at
all. She seductively unties his TIE --

HILLARY (CONT'D)
You mentioned, you also wanted to
chat. What about?

She wraps his wrists together with the tie. Tight. Paul
fumbles his words --

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

PAUL
Important. It wasn't. Just, thought
it was the best time to fire Tamara...

She unclasps his belt. Pulls it free as she yanks his pants
down with his boxers. Exposing him --

PAUL (CONT'D)
She's...not carrying her load around
here.

She fastens the belt around Paul's neck. Creating a kinky
leash. Yanks it --

HILLARY
On your knees, Mr. Manager...

He's down in a flash as she extends her Stiletto to his mouth --

HILLARY (CONT'D)
Suck it.

As Paul nurses on the heel of the stiletto, they lock eyes --

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hillary, your eyes...

She's started her TRANSFORMATION, but she's used to the pain
now. Doesn't miss a beat as she yanks Paul's head back by
the leash. His eyes widen as she removes her underwear...

PAUL (CONT'D)
Ow, that hurts --

...and stuffs them in his open mouth --

HILLARY
Sweet enough for you?

Paul nods. Getting back into it. She strokes him from behind
as he sucks on her underwear. His eyes rolling back in his
head in ecstasy --

BAM! Hillary flattens Paul out with a knee to the center of
his back, using the pain of her TRANSFORMATION to fuel her
righteous rage as she pulls his leash taught, CHOKING him,
and she -- RAMS HER BLACK STILETTO HEEL IN HIS ASS!

Paul BUCKS in pain as his SCREAMS are muffled by Hillary's
underwear and drowned out by the TV --

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (3)

38

MICHEAL RENNIE (V.O.)

It was then I saw with horror what I had become. I had released not the angel from my soul, but the monster from its pit...

The voice over punctuates the violation happening just OUT OF FOCUS in the b.g. as Hillary rides Paul like a bronco, jamming the Heel in over and over --

MICHEAL RENNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The monster however had a taste for pleasure, and I indulged it. I could, whenever I choose, become this creature whom I called Mr. Hyde...

WHAM! For white privilege. WHAM! For male privilege. WHAM! For misogynistic predators that have perpetrated their crimes on the most vulnerable with impunity.

MICHEAL RENNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

As time passed, I found a strange enjoyment in transforming myself from Jekyll to Hyde...

Paul finally goes limp. Hillary slips back on the bloody Stiletto. Flips him over. He watches DEAD-EYED as the white skin on her face SPLITS APART, all the way down her body -- leaving nothing but Ruby and her vengeful smile standing before him!

*

As Paul screams his motherfucking head off through his gag --

RUBY

I wanted you to know a nigger bitch did this to you...

39 **INT. BATHROOM - LETI'S BEDROOM - WINTHROP HOUSE - NIGHT**

39

Leti soaks in the tub. Reading her BIBLE. Trying to relax, but it's hard to sustain focus. *Monsters. Killers. Magic.* That's her life now.

There's a SOFT KNOCK at the door. She looks up to see --

ATTICUS

What verse are you rereading?

LETI

You mean reading for the first time?

He sits on the closed toilet as she confesses --

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

LETI (CONT'D)

My momma's faith was real. That's why she dragged me and Ruby to church every Sunday. But it never made me a true believer. I just became someone who could perform the part...

She trails off, trying to find the words to express the yearning she's been feeling.

LETI (CONT'D)

It's hard to put into words what I'm searching for. Maybe it's just that I've seen so much bad recently that I need to find some good.

ATTICUS

I know I brought most of the bad, but I'm going to try and bring some good too.

Leti looks at him now. Really looks at him. Emotion rising. But she keeps it in check --

LETI

What does that mean? Cause the last time I thought we were going somewhere, you were planning to head back to Florida.

She waits for Atticus's answer. His silence stirring her own doubts. Finally --

ATTICUS

There was a girl...when I was over in Korea.

FUCK. That deadens Leti's emotion as Atticus continues --

ATTICUS (CONT'D)

It ended...

Dark memories surface. But he shakes them off --

ATTICUS (CONT'D)

...in a strange place.

There's more to the story than that, but Leti's mind is on more important matters --

LETI

Did you love her?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2)

39

He weighs that loaded question. The truth verses what he wishes where true.

ATTICUS

Wartime is a different world. You're in the middle of battle and everything moves in slow motion, and then life outside of it explodes like a rocket. I don't know if what I had with Ji-ah was love. I never had any good examples of it growing up. My parents' love was enduring. But unknowable. I remember more times wondering -- no fearing that it wasn't there than seeing it.

That settles on him in a different way now. *Could his father be gay?* His words stir Leti to open up as well --

LETI

I grew up feeling like love wasn't special. Seemed like my momma fell into it every two seconds. And Ruby's just like her. I never wanted to be with a man when it didn't mean anything. So I decided a long time ago that I was going to wait for something special.

That declaration isn't lost on Atticus. He looks at her now. Really looks at her. Emotion rising --

ATTICUS

This is special. And I'm not at all confused about that anymore.

A soft smile spreads Leti's lips. Atticus's too. Let it sit a moment -- our favorite couple's now official.

ATTICUS (CONT'D)

I'm sure the water's getting cold...

He moves to get up, but she holds the Bible out to him --

LETI

Read to me.

So Atticus settles back in, opens the Bible, and --

ATTICUS

"Jesus answered and said unto him;
Verily, verily, I say unto thee;
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (3) 39

ATTICUS (CONT'D)
Except a man be born again, he cannot
see the kingdom of God..."

As Leti turns on the hot water again, relaxing...

40 **INT. WILLIAM'S MANSION - NIGHT** 40

William comes in through the front. Hurried. Heads straight
for the basement door, and is surprised to find Ruby in a
chair right in front of it --

WILLIAM
What are you doing?

RUBY
What's in the basement?

William pulls the key out with TREMBLING hands --

WILLIAM
Ruby, please, get out of my way...

She doesn't budge. He turns, heading back towards the front
door, but Ruby's right on his heels --

RUBY
You and your lady friend go in and
out of there at all hours, and I
want to know --

SUDDENLY -- William drops to his knees as PAIN sears through
his abdomen. Ruby moves to help him on instinct --

RUBY (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

He tries to speak, but an ANGUISHED MOAN swallows his words
as his forehead BUBBLES, and -- his body MORPHS VIOLENTLY,
like another body is trying to escape from it, a FEMALE BODY!

Ruby steps back in horror as William PEELS BACK his skin,
his rib-cage and pelvic bones CRACKING and READJUSTING, and --
CHRISTINA EMERGES FROM HER WILLIAM COCOON!

Ruby stands. Mouth agape. Dizzy with betrayal. Utter
fucking betrayal. Rightfully so, because --

RUBY (CONT'D)
You've been William...this whole
fucking time...

41 **OMITTED**

41

42 **INT. DARK ROOM - WINTHROP HOUSE - NIGHT** 42

Atticus's eyes fight him as he scribbles on the now PARTIALLY DECODED Translation Grid. Working intensely. He deciphers his first word that we DO NOT SEE. Only the ripple of SHOCK that moves across his face.

He stares at the word as if recognizing it from some distant dream. He grabs the Grid, jumps up from the table...

43 **OMITTED** 43

44 **INT. HALLWAY - WINTHROP HOUSE - NIGHT** 44

Atticus picks up the phone. Feverishly dials --

OPERATOR (ON PHONE)
Where can I direct your call?

ATTICUS
555 438 520 3093 2915

The line RINGS and RINGS, finally -- someone picks up. But they don't speak. Atticus's heart beats with FEAR --

ATTICUS (CONT'D)
How did you know?

Just the light trill of BREATHING for a long moment, then --

JI-AH (ON PHONE)
You believe me now...

Atticus presses the phone to his ear, desperate --

ATTICUS
You said if I came home I would die.
How did you know, goddamnit?!

JI-AH (ON PHONE)
You should have listened to me...

Atticus tries to fit the strange puzzle pieces together --

ATTICUS
What are you?

A beat. Ji-ah hangs up. With DIAL TONE buzzing in his ear, Atticus stares down at the Translation Grid. And now we see the decoded word that has him shaken to his core --

"D-I-E"

45 OMITTED
AND
46

45
AND
46

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE

Misha Green