

JOHN CASOR
Giovanni Vines

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JOHN CASOR

SLIDE:

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

SOUNDTRACK:

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

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPER: 1641

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

She is wearing elegant seventeenth-century undergarments, as her long brown ringlets dance behind her head.

Virginia Johnson is the first-born child of Anthony Johnson, gentleman Virginia tobacco planter. Anthony is one of a dozen prosperous planters, scattered along the eastern shore of Northampton, Virginia, who were born in Africa.

Virginia and her seventeen-year-old sister, ELIZABETH, both possess striking beauty. In a world where teenage boys outnumber teenage girls by six-to-one, they are a duo to be reckoned with.

Virginia is a complex personality, moving in and out of various personae fluidly. She is at once coquette, dominatrix, seducer, innocent virgin, confidante, defender of family, and defender of her beloved native Virginia.

Virginia brings her horse to a halt and turns to see her sister Elizabeth, down the beach, waving her arms. Elizabeth straightens her hair, preferring conservative, renaissance hair styles.

She kicks the horse and gallops back toward her sister.

Virginia dismounts.

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

Who is there to know? The gulls?

ELIZABETH

What if the Spanish were to
land and come ashore? What then?
You don't want them getting their
hands on you. Or perhaps you do.

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

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

EXT. DOCKSIDE - DAY

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

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

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

CAPTAIN

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

ANTHONY

Cause any trouble?

CAPTAIN

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

ANTHONY

What's his name?

CAPTAIN

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

He motions for John Casor to come closer.

CAPTAIN

(to John Casor)

Tell him your name, your African name.

JOHN CASOR

Dongkasur.

CAPTAIN

(shrugs)

The lieutenant wrote John Casor.

ANTHONY

Know any English?

CAPTAIN

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

ANTHONY

His destiny lies on the land, here in Virginia. John Casor is going to plant tobacco.

He pulls out his coin pouch.

ANTHONY

Sixty pounds you say. Not thirty?

CAPTAIN

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

ANTHONY

Very well then, sixty it is.

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

CAPTAIN

Bill of sale.

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

The captain salutes and walks away.

CAPTAIN

All right then mate.

Anthony motions to John Casor.

ANTHONY JOHNSON

Come on.

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

EXT. VIRGINIA WATERWAY - DAY

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

ANTHONY

Dongo. Dongo is your homeland?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, the hills.

ANTHONY

I remember. Ancient reverie now.
From a large tribe?

JOHN CASOR

No, small. I was chief.

ANTHONY

How is it you were chief?

JOHN CASOR

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

ANTHONY

But they caught you.

JOHN CASOR

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

Anthony takes a moment to process.

ANTHONY

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

JOHN CASOR

It is very beautiful here.

ANTHONY

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

He thinks, then corrects himself.

ANTHONY

Actually, two thousand. One day, you'll have your own land. You'll be able to work when you please, and play when you please. And you'll be an expert grower. My product is the finest there is, best tobacco grown anywhere in the New World. You can make anything you want of your life here. Virginia is a land of opportunity, for all, no matter where a man comes from, or how he gets here.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

The Johnson family lives in a modest, 7-bedroom English manor house. The grounds are nicely landscaped, with flower beds and shrubs beneath a scattering of shade trees.

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

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

His hair is absolutely abominable.

VIRGINIA

Frightening.

ELIZABETH

We will have to make some accommodation with the hair.

VIRGINIA

Yes. I have a plan.

ELIZABETH

Oh, I do so love your plans.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Anthony is completing his instructions to the men.

ANTHONY

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

The three men begin their return to the fields.

SERVANT

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

INT. JOHNSON STABLE - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

He is terribly dirty.

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

VIRGINIA

Here, wipe his body down with this.

Elizabeth plunges the rag into a bucket of water.

ELIZABETH

Do I dare? He is filthy.

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

ANTHONY

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

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

Dreadful.

ANTHONY

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

VIRGINIA

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

ANTHONY

Well, finish all of this up.

(to John Casor)

As soon as they're done, back to work.

Anthony walks off in a huff.

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

VIRGINIA

(to Elizabeth)

Here. He's gone.

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

VIRGINIA

So, your name is John?

JOHN CASOR

Dongkasur.

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

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

JOHN CASOR

I have one name. Dongkasur. Why does one need two names?

ELIZABETH

(to Virginia)

That's his African name.

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

Does your African name have some meaning?

JOHN CASOR

Dongkasur means gently falling rain.

Virginia and Elizabeth share a smile.

VIRGINIA

(to John Casor)

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

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

Very good. Now Elizabeth is my sister. You will address her as Miss Elizabeth, but not always. When you are alone with her, or with the two of us, you will address her as Miss Lizzy. Do you understand?

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

Ginny!

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

Daddy still does not?

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

Four thousand, five hundred!

They laugh giddily.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

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

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

VIRGINIA

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

Elizabeth walks up and sits next to Virginia.

VIRGINIA

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

She writes it out.

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

But together, we're girls.

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

Two girls.

JOHN CASOR

(to Virginia)
Why are you showing me this?

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

Everything that's official is put
into writing.

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

MARY JOHNSON

Explain this to your father.

ELIZABETH

Too stubborn. We tried.

MARY JOHNSON

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

EXT. SETTLEMENT DOCKSIDE - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

(to Elizabeth)

I do hope we haven't missed the Ceremony.

(to John Casor)

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

EXT. OPEN MEADOW - DAY

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

SPEAKER

Thirty-four years ago today, the Godspeed, Discovery, and Susan Constant delivered the very first Englishmen here, to our beautiful land, Virginia, to begin a new life in the new world.

As the speaker continues, a little white girl named SARAH approaches Virginia and tugs on her sleeve.

SARAH

You're Virginia Johnson.

VIRGINIA

Yes, I am. And who might you be?

SARAH

Sarah Cromwell. My sister speaks of you.

VIRGINIA

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

Sarah is embarrassed and runs off.

SPEAKER

We are fortunate today to have with us one of Virginia's founding souls, the seventh-born child of Virginia, Miss Virginia Johnson.

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

EXT. SETTLEMENT - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

We must all attempt to give each boy ample attention. If one is left out he will feel badly. We must always do our utmost to keep the boys cheerful, raise their spirits.

INT. TANNER'S SHOP - DAY

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

THOMAS' FRIEND

Virginia Johnson. She's here!

Thomas rips off his apron and turns to his father.

THOMAS

I must away.

Thomas' father and brother watch him run off.

THOMAS' FATHER

(shaking head)

Virginia Johnson.

EXT. SETTLEMENT - DAY

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

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

VIRGINIA

(to the group)

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

JULIANNE

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

VIRGINIA

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

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

BOYS IN CROWD

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

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

KATHERINE

(to Elizabeth)

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

ELIZABETH

Why don't we ask John Casor?

VIRGINIA

John Casor, come closer.

Still holding the bouquet, he moves to her side.

VIRGINIA

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

KATHERINE

Has Miss Virginia ever struck you
with her whip?

JOHN CASOR

Yes miss.

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

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Virginia enters a church as two women are leaving.

WOMAN

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

VIRGINIA

No, regrettably, the journey is
tiresome.

WOMAN

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

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

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

THOMAS

You are so generous to spend some minutes with me.

VIRGINIA

Of course, Thomas. And you are equally generous.

Thomas gathers up his courage.

THOMAS

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

Virginia squeezes his hand gently.

VIRGINIA

Thomas.

THOMAS

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

VIRGINIA

Thomas.

THOMAS

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

VIRGINIA

(interrupting)

Thomas, you are the dearest boy. You would be a prize for any girl. It is sad that there are so few girls. But more and more, they keep coming. Every ship has new girls.

VIRGINIA (cont)

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

The two sit in silence.

VIRGINIA

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

THOMAS

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

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

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

HENRY

May I sit with you?

VIRGINIA

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

HENRY

Thoughts, I think.

VIRGINIA

Thoughts. Tell me your thoughts.

HENRY

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

VIRGINIA

How intriguing. Tell me more.

HENRY

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

VIRGINIA

Go on.

HENRY

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

VIRGINIA

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

HENRY

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

VIRGINIA

Yes, and what am I wearing?

HENRY

(embarrassed)

Well, you see, that's just it...

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

JULIANNE

It is time. We must go.

VIRGINIA

(to Henry)

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

EXT. SETTLEMENT - COMMONS AREA - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

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

JULIANNE

We were thinking up to five.

VIRGINIA

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

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

VIRGINIA

Well?

JULIANNE

Are they alright?

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

EXT. SETTLEMENT DOCKSIDE - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

(to friends)

Now, you must come. You can stay as long as you please.

ELIZABETH

We have hordes of room.

VIRGINIA

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

JULIANNE

Full moon. It sounds so pagan.

ELIZABETH

You will faint from delight.

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

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

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

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

Virginia and Elizabeth are off to the side speaking privately.

ELIZABETH

Is William here?

VIRGINIA

Yes, inside. But I haven't seen his father.

ELIZABETH

And his father is to make the announcement.

Virginia nods. They share an anxious look.

INT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - PARLOR - DAY

The room is full of men, standing and sitting, with mugs of ale in hand, and cigars and pipes billowing smoke.

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

FRANCIS PAYNE

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

ANTHONY

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

Laughter rises and subsides.

FRANCIS PAYNE

A mathematician from Padua has fashioned a spy glass with the most powerful magnification, as to be able to see the planets and the heavens. He sees moons

FRANCIS PAYNE (cont)
transiting around the planet
Jupiter. And he sees that Venus
has phases, as the moon has its
phases.

WHITE NEIGHBOR
And what are his conclusions?

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

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

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

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

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH addresses the gathering.

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

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

The young recorder player begins a new tune.

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

LT. JOHN NEALE
Now they'll be mingling with
our blood. Little black and white
monkeys.

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

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

MATTHEW PIPPIN
Posing like proper Englishmen.

LT. JOHN NEALE
They should all be pressed into
service.

INT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Anthony is meeting with Captain Scarborough.

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

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

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH
And how many of them is Elizabeth
in love with?

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

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

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

WILLIAM TUCKER

(to Mary)

May I steal Virginia away mum?

Mary smiles warmly. William leads Virginia off.

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

VIRGINIA

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

WILLIAM TUCKER

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

VIRGINIA

Family situation. Your family.

WILLIAM TUCKER

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

VIRGINIA

(interrupting)

William, stop! Is the wedding off?

WILLIAM TUCKER

Yes.

Virginia tries to settle her emotions.

WILLIAM TUCKER

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

VIRGINIA

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

WILLIAM TUCKER

Yes, exactly.

VIRGINIA

And your family? I missed that part.

WILLIAM TUCKER

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

VIRGINIA

A white girl.

William nods.

VIRGINIA

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

WILLIAM TUCKER

Virginia, I adore you.

VIRGINIA

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

WILLIAM TUCKER

Virginia, I'm so sorry.

VIRGINIA

Wait, wait, okay, this has nothing

VIRGINIA (cont)
to do with family in England. This
is about your father.

She's right, and his expression confirms it.

WILLIAM
I'm sorry.

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

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

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

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

INT. JOHNSON STABLE - DAY

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

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

Virginia lifts her arm and points to her forearm.

VIRGINIA
This.

She grabs her hair.

VIRGINIA
And this.

MARY

Oh, I see.

ELIZABETH

I thought you two were in love.

MARY

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

ELIZABETH

Were you and Daddy in love?

Mary laughs heartily.

MARY

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

ELIZABETH

When Daddy wants something, he goes after it.

MARY

Yes, he does.

(to Virginia)

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

VIRGINIA

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

VIRGINIA (cont)
ashamed because of how I look?

MARY
Give it some time. Time heals
everything.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - DAY

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

VIRGINIA
John Casor, follow me.

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

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Virginia stands in the doorway and invites him in.

VIRGINIA
Come in.

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

VIRGINIA
Sit here.

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

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

John Casor is too intimidated to respond.

VIRGINIA
This is my bedchamber. This is my
private place, my safe place. In
here, I can do as I please.
Anything. Like wearing clothing.
I love beautiful garments, but

VIRGINIA (cont)

dresses and corsets can be so bothersome, so restrictive. You don't know what a corset is, do you?

He appears confused.

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

Yes, Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

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

Virginia Johnson dramatic pause.

VIRGINIA

You see, there are two worlds, my

VIRGINIA (cont)

world and Daddy's world. Daddy wants you to live in his world. But his world is...do you know the words, heaven and hell?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

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

He nods an uncertain nod.

VIRGINIA

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

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

VIRGINIA

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

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

VIRGINIA

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

He hands over the pillow.

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

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

VIRGINIA

(warmly)

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

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

EXT. TOBACCO FIELD - DAY

Anthony Johnson is a hands-on planter. He is out by the fields, working with his servants. Mary hurries toward him.

MARY JOHNSON
 (to Anthony)
 Visitors. Lord Clifford.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - SIDE LAWN - DAY

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

SIR ARCHER and LORD CLIFFORD are seated under a shade tree with Anthony. Mary serves tea and snacks, while the nobles crank up their cigars.

SIR ARCHER
 (to Mary)
 Thank you, mum.

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

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

Virginia, in her best dress, has snuck out onto the lawn and is standing directly behind Anthony, so that the young nobles can see her, without having to look away from Anthony.

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

LORD CLIFFORD

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

SIR ARCHER

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

LORD CLIFFORD

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

Anthony realizes they're looking at something behind him. He turns to see Virginia in her coquette pose.

ANTHONY

Your mother needs you.

She is unmoved by his hint.

ANTHONY

(angrily)

Your mother!

Anthony can see that he has lost their attention.

ANTHONY

Gentlemen, I might be presumptuous in saying this, but I will anyway. When a planter's son, comes calling, hoping to match wits with Virginia, I pay it little heed. Most have been out here already. But if a man of noble birth comes hither, now that's a different matter. You gentlemen are always welcome in my home. But if a visit is for the purpose of enjoying the company of my elder daughter, that would first require a conversation between you and your fathers.

SIR ARCHER

Sir, you are in no way
presumptuous.

LORD CLIFFORD

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

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

Yes, always hot.

VIRGINIA

How did you dress? What did you
wear?

JOHN CASOR

We wore nothing.

She lets that sink in.

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

There were no women. Girls are
easy to catch.

VIRGINIA

So, there were no women at all?

JOHN CASOR

No. There were no women.

VIRGINIA

Did you go out looking for a woman?

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

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

She lets that sink in.

VIRGINIA

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

Virginia suddenly becomes stern and steely.

VIRGINIA

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

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

VIRGINIA

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

Virginia and John Casor are walking through the dunes. She stops and looks him over. She very slowly walks around him, sizing up his body. She grasps his forearm gently and moves his hand to his penis.

VIRGINIA

Touch your body.

She continues to walk around him, very slowly, paying close attention to what he has in his hand. She stops.

VIRGINIA

Take your hand away.

She appears mesmerized as she gazes at him.

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

Yes, Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

In the future, you may only do it in my presence. Carry me to the water.

She wraps her arm around his neck. He picks her up into his arms, and carries her toward the water. At the water's edge, he continues to hold onto her.

VIRGINIA

Set me down.

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

VIRGINIA

Set me down.

He continues to hold her in his arms.

VIRGINIA

John Casor, how dare you defy my order? You have misbehaved again. Now, you will be whipped.

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

Why won't you set me down?

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

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

He sets her down gently. Virginia is intoxicated with power. She takes his forearm and moves it toward his penis.

VIRGINIA

Touch your body.

She gazes for a moment, then turns and walks out into the surf. After a few paces, she turns 180 degrees and walks backwards.

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

After two wave slaps, she allows a wave to carry her to his feet. She stands.

VIRGINIA

When we are here, on my land, together, I want you to cause your body to be as it is now; enlarged,

VIRGINIA (cont)
extended, long, and solid. I want
you to maintain it in this
condition so that I may, at all
times, have the pleasure of gazing
at your manhood, in the fullness
of its glory.

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

INT. ANTHONY'S STUDY - DAY

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

VIRGINIA
Daddy, I want to be called lady.

ANTHONY
You want what?

VIRGINIA
To be called lady. Like the nobles.

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

VIRGINIA
Yes, exactly.

ANTHONY
You mean around here, around the
manor?

VIRGINIA
No, everywhere.

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

VIRGINIA

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

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

ANTHONY

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

VIRGINIA

So, does that mean you won't help.

ANTHONY

(exasperated)

Yes.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anthony and Mary are in bed sharing pillow talk.

ANTHONY

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

MARY

Antonio, it is an innocent madness.

ANTHONY

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

MARY

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

ANTHONY

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

EXT. JOHNSON LAWN - NIGHT

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

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

JOHN CASOR

As daylight doth a lamp,
her eyes in heaven would,
through the airy region
stream so bright,
that birds would sing,
and think it were not...

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

ANTHONY

Now what's all this!

VIRGINIA

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

ANTHONY

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

She wraps a light robe around her shoulders.

VIRGINIA

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

ANTHONY

You know, Virginia, your behavior
at times alarms me. You live in a
sort of made-up world. You are
somehow incapable of comprehending
the fact that there are two worlds.
The rest of us live in the real

ANTHONY (cont)

world. And the worst of it is, you have no idea what I'm talking about. That dressing room of yours is a perfect example. You possess more dresses than there are days in the year. You've got fifty acres in that dressing room.

VIRGINIA

But Daddy, it's just a small space.

ANTHONY

Not small enough!

Anthony huffs off.

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

Virginia, Elizabeth, and John Casor are on horses, on their way to Virginia's land.

VIRGINIA

(to John Casor)

Elizabeth has no experience with boys, no intimate experience. She will soon find herself with her husband, on their wedding night, unprepared. We must help her gain a greater knowledge of men, so that her marriage will flourish and thrive. We will employ your body for demonstration.

There is a conspiratorial blush on their faces.

EXT. SAND DUNES - DAY

The three find a cozy area in the dunes. Virginia and Elizabeth sit comfortably, with John Casor standing.

VIRGINIA

(to John Casor)

Remove your clothing.

ELIZABETH

You simply order him to strip?

VIRGINIA

Not an order. John Casor never wore
clothing until after his capture.
Dongo is very hot.

Elizabeth is embarrassed, and can only sneak peeks at him.

ELIZABETH

I thought we were just going to
talk.

VIRGINIA

You gain no experience from mere
words. Soon, you will have your own
John Casor next to you in your bed,
each night.

ELIZABETH

Richard is no servant.

VIRGINIA

Unless you choose to make him one.
Take a good, long look. Feast your
eyes.

ELIZABETH

He is exceedingly beautiful.

VIRGINIA

Now, without delay, we will pursue
the essential knowledge.

(to John Casor)

Touch your body.

John Casor follows her command.

ELIZABETH

Oh Virginia, I must not witness
this. We must leave.

VIRGINIA

Watch.

The two women watch. Elizabeth's eyes get wider and wider.

ELIZABETH

Oh! Sister Virginia, I am struck

ELIZABETH (cont)
with fear. The wedding is off. I
cannot be a bride.

VIRGINIA
Pray tell?

ELIZABETH
I will surely die on my wedding
night. I will be ripped in two.

VIRGINIA
You will not die. Babies come
through there.

ELIZABETH
It is the size of a baby.

VIRGINIA
Surely, no.

ELIZABETH
Half a baby then.

Virginia's facial response suggests that half a baby might
be about right.

ELIZABETH
What do you do with this man?

VIRGINIA
What we are now doing. Julianne's
mother says that men make too many
seeds, and they must continually
expel a portion to make way for
new seeds. I allow John Casor to
release his seeds.

ELIZABETH
Your logic is always immaculate.
Ginny, you are the most wicked girl
in all of Virginia. I am so glad
you are my sister.

VIRGINIA
(to John Casor)
Come closer.

VIRGINIA (cont)
 (to Elizabeth)
 Now, reach out and grasp ahold.
 Experience his firmness.

ELIZABETH
 Never!

VIRGINIA
 You must. This is our purpose here.
 It will help ensure your successful
 union with Richard. You will be
 fully prepared.

ELIZABETH
 You first.

VIRGINIA
 I am not the one about to be wed.
 Here.

She takes ahold of Elizabeth's hand and places it on John
 Casor's penis.

ELIZABETH
 It is firm. Like holding a branch.

Virginia
 (to John Casor)
 Now, take Elizabeth's hand in yours
 and direct her movement.

Elizabeth is fully engaged now.

ELIZABETH
 Yes, I see. A bit like tugging
 an utter. Squeezing. Stroking.

VIRGINIA
 John Casor, you may release your
 seeds at your leisure.
 (to Elizabeth)
 Watch closely.

ELIZABETH
 Oh, I do pray that Richard is not
 so large.

The women watch. Then, Elizabeth suddenly screams, pulls her hand away, reacts backwardly, and gathers her dress. At first, she is at a loss for words. She breaks into giggle.

ELIZABETH

Ginny, I was mistaken. You are not the most wicked girl in Virginia. You are the most wicked girl in all of England.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

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

JULIANNE (O.C.)

Virginia. Virginia!

Virginia hurries down the hallway to a guest room. Inside, her three girlfriends are fussing with the bodices provided by Virginia. The bodices are cut so low, they cover none of the breast. Instead, they serve only to lift them.

JULIANNE

Is there more to these?

KATHERINE

They cover nothing.

AMY

Surely, you cannot imagine we will wear these.

VIRGINIA

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

JULIANNE

Surely not.

VIRGINIA

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

KATHERINE

But we cannot wear them here.

VIRGINIA

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

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The girls are waiting at the forest's edge, with light shawls draped around their shoulders. John Casor approaches.

VIRGINIA

You lead the way. We will follow.

The girls do their best to keep up with him as he marches through the forest.

John Casor is in a small clearing, sizing up a tall, straight tree. A fallen tree trunk lies on the ground.

The girls find him in the clearing. Virginia inspects his chosen climbing tree.

VIRGINIA

Looks like a good one.

The other girls have already taken seats on the fallen trunk. Virginia joins them. John Casor stands, facing the girls a few feet away. Six breasts are in full view.

VIRGINIA

(to John Casor)

Remove your clothing.

The girls blush.

KATHERINE

Seriously?

VIRGINIA

John Casor hates clothing.

(to John Casor)

Would you prefer to wear clothing, or not?

JOHN CASOR

I don't like clothing.

VIRGINIA

See, being naked makes him happy.

JULIANNE

Yes, you're right. It's as if we're doing him a favor.

Virginia rises and stands next to John Casor. She begins stroking his muscles with her fingertips, outlining the cuts in his muscle.

She moves her free hand behind him, out of the view of her friends, and begins scratching his butt and lower back with her fingernails.

VIRGINIA

John Casor is a virgin. There were no women where he came from. He has little knowledge of women's bodies.

(to John Casor)

My friends are very pretty, don't you think?

JOHN CASOR

Yes, Miss Ginny.

VIRGINIA

Their skin is white and supple. Their bosoms are lovely. Round, soft, creamy.

JOHN CASOR

I like bosoms.

John Casor's body begins to react to the stimuli.

JULIANNE

Virginia, there is something amiss with your man.

Virginia joins them on the log. Agog, they enjoy the view.

KATHERINE

Oh no, there is nothing wrong.

JULIANNE

He is swelling up. He looks to

JULIANNE (cont)
 explode. He is more a tree than
 the trees.

AMY
 I feel so...stimulated.

VIRGINIA
 (to John Casor)
 Climb for us.

John Casor goes to his tree and begins climbing.

KATHERINE
 I think I want to go to Africa...
 just to visit.

Amy rises, moves to the tree, and looks upward. She faints.
 The other girls ignore her.

VIRGINIA
 While you are here visiting, we
 will take long, daily walks, deep
 into the forest and watch John
 Casor climb trees.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Virginia and her three friends are preparing to leave.

VIRGINIA
 Now, do we have everything? The
 bibles.

Amy lifts up a satchel.

VIRGINIA
 What about the bodices?

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

VIRGINIA
 Life affords unexpected
 opportunities. One should always
 be prepared.

KATHERINE

(to Amy)

Get the bodices.

EXT. VIRGINIA WOODS - DAY

A raucous party is underway in a clearing, attended by teenagers and young adults. The racial mix is about evenly split. It is midday, but a bonfire crackles. A large barrel of ale is propped up on a log, with mugs in many hands.

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

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

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

EXT. RIVER TRIBUTARY - RIVERBANK - DAY

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

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

VIRGINIA

(to friends)

The cross, perfect. Amy has the Bibles.

(to Julianne)

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

EXT. VIRGINIA WOODS - NIGHT

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

A series of shots captures the festivities. Blacks and whites intermingle fluidly.

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

Amy has donned a bodice and dances alongside a topless black girl.

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

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

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - DAY

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

ANTHONY

That's it! You have it now!

John Casor slowly reloads.

ANTHONY

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

JOHN CASOR

Why do they want to harm us?

ANTHONY

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

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

ANTHONY

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

He pats John Casor on the back and walks off.

EXT. VIRGINIA TRAIL - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

Today we will go to my lake and you will bathe me. You will apply soap with your hands, slowly. Devote careful attention to areas of my body most likely to become soiled. Then I will teach you to kiss. You will kiss my body from top to bottom. If you discover a particular feature of my body that you especially admire, you may linger there, as you please.

JOHN CASOR

Yes Miss Ginny.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

Mingle your hand with mine.

They comingle their hands in his lap.

VIRGINIA

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

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

JOHN CASOR

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

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

VIRGINIA

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

EXT. JAMES RIVER - DAY

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

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

Virginia is crying against Elizabeth's shoulder.

EXT. SCARBOROUGH MANOR HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

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

MINISTER

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

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

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

MARY

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

ANTHONY

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

MARY

Give them the fifty acres.

ANTHONY

No.

Virginia and Elizabeth speak privately.

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

I hear not the call of matrimony.

ELIZABETH

You spoil your chances with a
fascination over a servant.

VIRGINIA

I prize his company.

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

Very well then. Man-puppy.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

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

BARRISTER

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

ANTHONY

Hand-written?

Anthony grabs the document.

MARY

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

ANTHONY

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

BARRISTER

Captain Scarborough seeks relief

BARRISTER (cont)
for payment of an unspecified debt.
Do you wish to contest?

MARY
We'll inform you.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

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

Anthony turns onto his side, violently.

ANTHONY
Oh, fie! Blast it!

EXT. BEACH - DUNES - NIGHT

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

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

VIRGINIA
What was it like in Dongo?

JOHN CASOR
Peaceful. The people of Dongo are nice. They're good to each other. They help each other.

VIRGINIA
Except the soldiers.

JOHN CASOR
The soldiers are not from Dongo.

JOHN CASOR (cont)

They come from the North. They use Dongo to find captives, because our people don't fight them. They just hide and wait for them to leave.

VIRGINIA

Why not fight them, to keep from being captured?

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

Who is the old man?

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

The soldiers never caught him?

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

The old man said that it is better to love the soldiers, and not harm them. He said we should love them the same way we love each other.

VIRGINIA

So, everybody hides...and climbs trees. Daddy had to fight the Pamunkey. If they attack again,

VIRGINIA (cont)
you'll have to fight them. The
English don't run and hide. They
stand and fight.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANTHONY
To the Parker's!

They head out.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOHN CASOR
Let's find the rest!

He remounts his horse.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

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

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH

We have the war plan from Jamestown. It is comprehensive, and has three phases. First, the Pamunkey will be driven back to the original treaty lines. Then, fortresses will be built at the falls of the James, the falls of the York, and a third on the Chickahominy. We will organize a fighting force of all able-bodied men. Once the fortresses are in

CAPTAIN SCARBOROUGH (cont)

place, we will hunt the Pamunkey
down like the heathen dogs they
are and eliminate them from the
face of God's earth, once and for
all!

The roar from the men, shakes the church.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPER: 1648

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

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

JOHN CASOR

Virginia. Virginia.

She pulls her head back.

JOHN CASOR

For seven years, you have made love
to me in your way. Now, for seven
years, I will make love to you, my
way.

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

INT. MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

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

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

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

CAPT. MONTAGUE
Yes. Gentlemen.

NICHOLAS SPENCER
Join us.

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

LT. JOHN NEALE
Perhaps we should get straight to the point. Now that the Pamunkey are exiled, our Virginia lands have expanded, significantly. While at the same time, demand for commodities produced in the colonies increases each day. Now, the dilemma.

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

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

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

MATTHEW PIPPIN
All we're getting now are felons.

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

NICHOLAS SPENCER

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

CAPT. MONTAGUE

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

MATTHEW PIPPIN

Without indentures.

CAPT. MONTAGUE

Yes. You will have them for life.

MATTHEW PIPPIN

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

LT. JOHN NEALE

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

CAPT. MONTAGUE

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

NICHOLS SPENCER

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

MATTHEW PIPPIN

We'll be able to work them longer hours. And negro women make good

MATTHEW PIPPIN (cont)
 field workers. English women
 do not.

CAPT. MONTAGUE
 Ships originating from Africa will
 arrive here in the spring and
 early summer, during cultivation.
 English ships must arrive later,
 after harvest, due to treacherous
 North Atlantic seas.

NICHOLAS SPENCER
 All in all, we will have an endless
 supply, with significant savings
 realized over time.

CAPT. MONTAGUE
 Indeed.

The men express their collective agreement and approval.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

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

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

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

VIRGINIA
 But why? You don't need land.

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

Virginia lets that sink in. She regards him respectfully.

VIRGINIA

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

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

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

VIRGINIA

Stay here, so you may hear what is
said.

JOHN CASOR

I will speak to him myself.

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

JOHN CASOR

Master Johnson, sir, may I speak with
you?

ANTHONY

Yes John. Yes, of course.

JOHN CASOR

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

Anthony was unprepared for this conversation.

ANTHONY

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

JOHN CASOR

When I work, I work hard for you.

ANTHONY

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

JOHN CASOR

I want my freedom now.

ANTHONY

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

JOHN CASOR

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

He pounds his chest.

JOHN CASOR

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

ANTHONY

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

JOHN CASOR

I, am Miss Virginia's man!

A deathly silence floods the room.

ANTHONY

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

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

Mary approaches Anthony from across the room.

ANTHONY

How long have you known?

Mary does not answer.

MARY

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

EXT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - DAY

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

GUARD

Mum?

VIRGINIA

I am here to see Sir Archer.

John Casor helps her dismount.

GUARD

Is he expecting you mum?

VIRGINIA

No, he is not.

GUARD

Who may I say is calling?

VIRGINIA

The seventh child of Virginia.

GUARD

Seventh - child - of Virginia.
Yes mum.

EXT. ENGLISH GARDEN - DAY

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

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

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

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

They're not offered the option.

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

When you say captives, you mean slaves.

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

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

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

The Virginia Commonwealth operates under English law.

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

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

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

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

SIR ARCHER

That's right.

VIRGINIA

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

SIR ARCHER

You are a most extraordinary woman. You are the only woman I know who would dare talk politics with a noble.

He gathers his thoughts.

SIR ARCHER

Virginia, I was raised in the aristocracy. I have an intimate understanding of the English mind and English thinking. Growing up, I was told that the Irish were inferior to the English. Inferior is a polite way of putting it. But then in school, I learned that the Irish people and the English people are essentially the same stock. We have always shared the same island. How could it be, then, that a group on one end of the island, was superior to a group living in another part? The English view themselves as being superior to other people. Other cultures, other races, other religions. This notion of superiority is imbedded in the English mind. Considering how they view the Irish, people of their own race, neighbors, Christians...how do you suppose they view Africans? People of another color entirely, non-Christian, who live a simple, Iron Age existence.

VIRGINIA

But they're not inherently inferior.

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

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

EXT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - DAY

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

VIRGINIA

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

EXT. FOREST - RIVERBANK - DAY

Virginia and John Casor are seated on logs.

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

No! I will find a way.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

CAPT. SAMUEL GOULDSMITH arrives on horseback, accompanied by a white servant. He dismounts.

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

JOHN CASOR

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

Anthony is now close by.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH
Anthony, what's this about?

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

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

We flash back momentarily to the scene at the dock, when the Captain hands Anthony the bill of sale, and it drops from his pocket.

We flash forward.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH
Anthony?

ANTHONY
That was the bill of sale.

CAPT. GOULDSMITH
Which you can produce.

ANTHONY
Of course, of course.

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

ANTHONY
I'll have to find it.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anthony and Mary are gazing out of the window together.

ANTHONY

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

MARY

So, it can't be proven either way.

ANTHONY

No.

MARY

Let him go.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Anthony has convened a gathering of the entire Johnson clan, including Elizabeth and Charles Scarborough.

ANTHONY

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

CHARLES SCARBOROUGH

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

MARY

Including slaves?

CHARLES SCARBOROUGH

Yes, although there has been only one.

ELIZABETH

Everyone should be free.

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

ANTHONY

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

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

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

MARY JOHNSON
Visitors. Out front.

ANTHONY
Who?

MARY JOHNSON
Just some people, with bibles and crosses.

ANTHONY
Bibles and crosses. Hmph.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Anthony exits the front door to find three MEN and two WOMEN holding bibles, with crosses around their necks.

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

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

ANTHONY
Import and urgency. Alright.

BIBLE WOMAN
It concerns your daughter, Virginia.

BIBLE MAN
Perhaps we should be forthright.

ANTHONY
Please do.

BIBLE MAN
It has become clear to us,

BIBLE WOMAN

Many of us,

BIBLE MAN

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

ANTHONY

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

BIBLE WOMAN

All the signs are there.

BIBLE MAN

Yes, barren, never married,
argumentative...

BIBLE WOMAN

Outspoken, cavorting with slaves
and heathens...

BIBLE MAN

We have spoken to a dozen witnesses
who testify to her lustful full-
moon orgies, with pagan rituals...

BIBLE WOMAN

Corrupted dozens of virgins. She
even advocated girls having
multiple husbands. I was there.

BIBLE MAN

Whenever she visits the settlement,
someone falls ill.

BIBLE WOMAN

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

ANTHONY

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

ANTHONY (cont)
a month for Bible studies. When
she comes, work stops.

BIBLE MAN
But we're not her about your
servants. It's your daughter.

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

Anthony returns to the house.

EXT./INT. - JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - DAY

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

EXT. BEACH - DAY

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

JOHN CASOR
Now I have nothing.

VIRGINIA
You have me.

JOHN CASOR
(warmly)

Yes.

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

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

VIRGINIA
How?

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

EXT/INT. PARKER PLANTATION - STABLE - DAY

ROBERT PARKER is tending a horse. John Casor enters.

JOHN CASOR
Mr. Parker, sir.

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

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

ROBERT PARKER
You're inquiring about an
indenture.

John Casor nods.

ROBERT PARKER
We always need more labor. How much
land?

JOHN CASOR
Twenty-five acres sir.

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

John Casor nods.

ROBERT PARKER
Alright, but it would have to be
seven years.

JOHN CASOR
Seven?

Robert Parker nods.

JOHN CASOR
May I think on it, sir?

ROBERT PARKER
Of course, you may.

EXT. KENDALL PLANTATION - DAY

John Casor is negotiating with WILLIAM KENDALL near a
cornfield.

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

JOHN CASOR
Thank you, sir. I will think on it.

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - DAY

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

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

JOHN CASOR
Fifty acres?

LT. JOHN NEALE
(nods)
All fifty.

JOHN CASOR
I will return tomorrow, sir.

EXT. JOHNSON STABLE - DAY

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

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

MARY
Where? With whom?

VIRGINIA
The Neale plantation.

MARY
Lieutenant John Neale?

Virginia nods.

MARY
Go speak to your father. Speak
to him. Go.

Virginia appears confused.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - REAR LAWN - DAY

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

VIRGINIA
Daddy. I have news of John Casor.

ANTHONY
What now?

VIRGINIA

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

ANTHONY

None of my concern.

VIRGINIA

It is with Lieutenant Neale.

Anthony's face shifts from pleasure to concern.

ANTHONY

He should have spoken to me.

VIRGINIA

Why?

ANTHONY

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

VIRGINIA

I believe so.

ANTHONY

(shaking head)

He won't see any land. Not from
Neale.

Mary calls out from the back of the house.

MARY

Tony, the barrister.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Anthony and his barrister are conferring.

BARRISTER

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

ANTHONY

Trying to steal a cow. Neale
has no conscience.

BARRISTER

Now there are two more.

ANTHONY

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

BARRISTER

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

ANTHONY

All four hundred and fifty acres?

BARRISTER

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

ANTHONY

Is there no end to this?

BARRISTER

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

ANTHONY

Because I'm African, a negro.

BARRISTER

That may very well be, sir.

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - FIELDS - DAY

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

BURLY WHITE MAN
Welcome to the farm, lad.

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

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - ENTRANCE - DAY

Virginia is atop her horse in the late afternoon, at the edge of the plantation, sitting impatiently, looking everywhere. With concern, she rides off.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Virginia approaches her mother.

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

MARY
I fear for him.

EXT. LT. JOHN NEALE PLANTATION - DAY

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

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

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

VIRGINIA
What have they done to you?

She kisses his face.

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

I placed my marke on the indenture.

VIRGINIA

We must get you back. There must be some way, legally, in the courts.

She cuddles next to him.

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

The bill of sale.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - BEDCHAMBER - DAY

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

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

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Virginia is entreating her father, with Mary nearby, observing and listening.

ANTHONY

He placed his marke on an indenture, a legally binding document. I discharged him in writing. There is little hope.

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

ANTHONY

What's this?

He picks it up. Mary comes over to inspect it.

MARY

It's John Casor's bill of sale.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

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

BARRISTER

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

VIRGINIA

What of our chances?

BARRISTER

Impossible to say, with any surety. You discharged Mr. Casor

BARRISTER (cont)
formally, in writing. Hopefully,
Neale's attorney will not ask
for that document to be admitted
into court record. Captain Neale
has some patronage with the courts,
in spite of his reputation. But I
give him no advantage there.

He picks up the bill of sale.

BARRISTER
It all comes down to this.

EXT. JOHNSON STABLES - DAY

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

MARY
Where are you going? We must
arrange an escort.

VIRGINIA
To better our chances. I will
ride alone.

EXT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - DAY

One of the guards helps Virginia off of her horse.

VIRGINIA
You may tell Sir Archer...

GUARD
We know who you are, mum.

EXT/INT. SIR ARCHER'S RESIDENCE - BALCONY - DAY

Sir Archer and Virginia sip tea on his balcony.

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

VIRGINIA

We will argue that it did not lapse.

SIR ARCHER

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

Sir Archer sips tea and ponders.

SIR ARCHER

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

VIRGINIA

John Casor is the greatest man alive.

SIR ARCHER

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

INT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

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

The panel of three justices renders their verdict.

CHIEF JUSTICE

A complaint was this day made to this court by the humble petition of Anthony Johnson, negro, against Mister John Neale, that he detaineth one John Casor, a negro, and servant to the plaintiff, under the pretense that the said John

CHIEF JUSTICE (cont)

Casor is a free man. After seriously considering and maturely weighing the evidence, this court rules that the said John Neale most unjustly kept the said negro, John Casor, from his master, Anthony Johnson. John Casor shall forthwith be returned unto the service of his master, Anthony Johnson, and his heirs, forever.

Heavy gavel comes down.

INT. MANOR LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lt. Neale is at the head of the big table, meeting with his slavery cabal.

LT. JOHN NEALE

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

MATTHEW PIPPIN

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

LT. JOHN NEALE

The accumulation of wealth by these negro planters must be discouraged for the same reason.

NICHOLAS SPENCER

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

LT. JOHN NEALE

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

NICHOLAS SPENCER
 Negroes should not be permitted
 same stature in the community as
 Englishmen.

The group voices their collective agreement.

EXT. BEACH - SWAMP - DAY

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

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

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

JOHN CASOR
 You see this? You know what
 this is?

VIRGINIA
 Dirt?

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

VIRGINIA
 You want to grow corn here?

JOHN CASOR
 And build a house.

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

JOHN CASOR
 Why not?

John Casor is leading his horse down the beach. Strapped to
 the horse are ropes, dragging a telephone pole-sized pole.

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

John Casor has positioned one of the poles so that one end is at the bottom of a hole. Ropes tied to his horse are strapped around the pole. He walks the horse cautiously to get the pole to vertical.

John Casor is leading a horse-drawn cart, piled high with planting soil.

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

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

JOHN CASOR

The rest will be easy.

VIRGINIA

How long will it take?

JOHN CASOR

A few months. We will have much corn.

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

Yes, it will be large.

VIRGINIA

Big enough for three?

They both beam and embrace.

EXT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

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

ANTHONY

Well, gentlemen, I'd invite you

ANTHONY (cont)

all in for a barrel and a smoke,
but you're not here to socialize.

LEAD WHITE MAN

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

ANTHONY

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

LEAD WHITE MAN

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

ANTHONY

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

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

Behind the house, Anthony is loading muskets. Mary joins
him.

MARY

They're gone. What was that?

ANTHONY

I don't like it.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOME - NIGHT

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

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

ELIZABETH

Do you feel anything yet?

VIRGINIA

I'm not sure.

MARY

It's early. You will.

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

ANTHONY

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

MARY

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

ANTHONY

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

MARY

Her temperament.

ANTHONY

Most erratic at times.

MARY

But we no longer worry.

JOHN CASOR

You have made me feel welcome.

ANTHONY

You're the father of our first grandchild.

MARY

You're family.

Virginia and Elizabeth share thoughts.

ELIZABETH

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

VIRGINIA

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

ELIZABETH

English marriages often abjure love. I was fortunate.

VIRGINIA

And the fire still burns?

ELIZABETH

Rages.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - NIGHT

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

A man lights a large haystack ablaze.

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

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

Men run through the cornfield, setting plants afire.

A man sets bundles of tobacco ablaze.

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

Another man lights a second small house on fire.

Two men set outbuildings afire.

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

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

ANTHONY

You'll need tools, so you know where they are. I'll have the men make a stack of lumber for you. Whatever you need.

JOHN CASOR

Thank you, sir. You are generous.

John Casor smells something in the air.

JOHN CASOR

Smoke. I smell smoke. It is not tobacco.

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

JOHN CASOR

Fire! Fire outside! Everything is burning!

The men race outside.

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - NIGHT

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

ANTHONY

The livestock! Get the animals out!

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

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

Anthony and John Casor view the devastation across the horizon.

JOHN CASOR

I'll get water!

ANTHONY

No, no. It's too late.

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

EXT. JOHNSON FARM - DAY

Anthony is walking his property along with John Casor, his two sons, and six of his African-born, neighboring property owners, including Francis Payne, who we remember from the Scarborough wedding announcement gathering.

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

ANTHONY JOHNSON

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

FRANCIS PAYNE

Who? And why?

ANTHONY JOHNSON

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

FRANCIS PAYNE

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

ANTHONY JOHNSON

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

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

JOHN CASOR

There were many horses here, ten
or twelve.

Anthony picks up one of the torches.

ANTHONY

Made no attempt to disguise their
deed.

JOHN CASOR

Do you know who did this?

ANTHONY

Hatred did this.

INT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

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

BARRISTER

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

CHIEF JUSTICE

This family has suffered a most
unfortunate fire. Mr. Johnson and
Mrs. Johnson have been honorable

CHIEF JUSTICE (cont)
 members of the Northampton
 community for over twenty-five
 years. Their known service and
 hard labors have contributed to
 the benefit of all. Without some
 assistance, the family may have
 difficulty obtaining their
 livelihood. Therefore, this court
 hereby excuses these three women,
 Mary Johnson, Virginia Johnson, and
 Elizabeth Johnson Scarborough from
 payment of annual taxes and charges
 for the County of Northampton
 public use, for the remainder of
 their natural lives.

EXT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

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

MARY JOHNSON

We finally have equal status with
 white women.

ELIZABETH

Legally at least.

VIRGINIA

We had to lose the farm to
 obtain it.

INT. JOHNSON MANOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

ANTHONY

Thirty-five years ago, I was on a
 ship, the James, surrounded by
 unfamiliar people speaking an
 unfamiliar language. I knew not
 where I was headed, nor what I
 would find. They put me in with
 a group of Englishmen, marched
 us off to the Bennet plantation on

ANTHONY (cont)

the south bank of the James. A year later, Pamunkey raided the colony. They killed fifty-two men on our farm. Only five of us survived. But the Bennets would not be defeated. We moved the plantation out here to Northampton, and began anew. It was the proper decision, with the ever-present threat from the naturals. Now, this family faces a threat, but not from naturals. We are threatened by our very neighbors. Fellow planters. Fellow Englishmen. I love Virginia. Virginia has given me freedom and the opportunity to fare well, and form this family. But I will never put Virginia, or anything else ahead of the safety and prosperity of my family. Mary and I have discussed the matter, and we have made the decision to relocate to Maryland. We will settle our affairs here, and go and find land there. My aspiration for the Johnson name, a legacy of merit and prosperity, can no longer be realized here in Virginia.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPER: 1670

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

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

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

JOHN CASOR

They will do it!

He dismounts.

VIRGINIA

Wonderful!

JOHN CASOR

It must go into your name, but
it will be ours. Fifty acres!

VIRGINIA

It will be our son's.

JOHN CASOR

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

VIRGINIA

And one day provide for their
own families.

They find a soft spot in the sand to sit.

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

That means nothing to me.

VIRGINIA

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

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

VIRGINIA

They almost had you. Another year...

JOHN CASOR

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

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

ELIZABETH
Virginia! Virginia!

Virginia waves. They scurry to the house.

ELIZABETH
We have been to Maryland. There is news.

VIRGINIA
Mummy and Daddy.

ELIZABETH
Daddy, we have lost him.

They share a moment to process the news.

VIRGINIA
What of Mummy?

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

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

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

VIRGINIA
For what purpose?

ELIZABETH
A mystery. We do not know.

VIRGINIA
We will attend.

INT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

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

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

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

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE

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

JURY FOREMAN

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

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

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE

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

Virginia has lost her composure. She bolts upright.

VIRGINIA

(to Chief Justice)

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

COUNTY ATTORNEY

This is outrageous!

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

VIRGINIA

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

The courtroom erupts. The chief justice hammers his gavel.

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE

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

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

EXT. NORTHAMPTON COURT - DAY

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

The barrister approaches John Casor and Virginia.

BARRISTER

Come and see me. Today.

INT. BARRISTER'S OFFICE - DAY

The barrister is counseling the couple in his office.

BARRISTER

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

VIRGINIA

Involving negroes.

BARRISTER

(nods)

Defining your father, and your
brother as aliens to England and
The Commonwealth...is an appalling
interpretation of the statute.
It has no precedent. These cases
are relatively rare, since
the number of negro land owners
has greatly diminished. But now,
this case presents a very grave
dilemma, indeed. Under the law,
John is, of course, property.

He gives them a moment to make the connection.

BARRISTER

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

JOHN CASOR

None.

BARRISTER

Correct.

VIRGINIA

(to John Casor)

They could take you.

(to barrister)

Could they? Could they take him?

BARRISTER

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

VIRGINIA

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

BARRISTER

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

(to Virginia)

If something should happen to you...

VIRGINIA

He'll return to slavery.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - SOLILOQUY

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

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

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

VIRGINIA

(lamenting)

Our home.

JOHN CASOR

You are my home.

VIRGINIA

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

JOHN CASOR

We'll move our dream with us to Maryland.

Virginia smiles and nods.

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

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

VIRGINIA

Who are you?
What has happened to you?
I don't know you.
You were my first love. And now...
You have betrayed me!
You are not Virginia!
Virginia would never abandon
her own children.
Look at me!
I(!), am Virginia!
I am the soul of Virginia!

John Casor wraps his arms around her, turns her, and the family continues their journey down the beach.

SCROLL:

In 1699, the Virginia Assembly ordered all recently freed negroes residing within the borders of the Commonwealth to leave, to help pave the way for the largest forced migration of people in human history.