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POINT OF HONOR

"Pilot"

#101

Written by

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CAST LIST

JOHN RHODES
KATE RHODES
ROBERT SUMNER
LORELEI SUMNER
ESTELLA RHODES
GARLAND RHODES
PALMER KANE
ABBY

RALSTON RHODES
BRYNE MURPHY
LOCKWOOD
CUTLER
MALCOLM SWANN
PHOEBE
ELIJAH
VIRGIL
ADOLPHUS
HANY

*

MR. CRADDOCK
BEN HOWLAND
WINTHROP
CALHOUN
CHARLES STOREY
BLANCHARD
KEEGAN
FRENCH PAINTER (BOTANCOURT)
RIDER
OTHER CADETS
SHOUTS FROM MOB
UNION SOLDIERS

CUT:
CELESTE MURPHY
PANICKED YANKEE
NARRATOR (V.O.)

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SET LIST

INTERIORS

WEST POINT:

STABLES
CHAPEL

POINT OF HONOR MANSION:

STAIRS/FOYER
FRONT PARLOR
BALL ROOM
KITCHEN
DINING ROOM
RALSTON'S STUDY

SWANN'S TAVERN

SLAVE CABIN

CUT:

WEST POINT CLASSROOM

POINT OF HONOR

FOYER
SITTING ROOM
DRESSING PARLOR
PANTRY

EXTERIORS

MANASSAS BATTLEFIELD:

UNION AREA
CONFEDERATE AREA
ROAD
SPLIT RAIL FENCE

WEST POINT:

ESTABLISHING
STABLES

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

EXTREME WIDE/ESTABLISHING
DOWNTOWN

RIDGE OVERLOOKING LYNCHBURG

POINT OF HONOR PLANTATION:

FRONT DRIVE
RIVER SIDE LAWN
FIELDS
FRONT VERANDA
REAR PORCH
FAMILY CEMETERY
SLAVE CABINS

LYNCHBURG WOODS:

GARLAND SPY AREA
RIDGE SCOUTING AREA
TREES/DENSE FOLIAGE
PICKET CLEARING
CREEK
NORTH OF RIDGE AREA
RIDGE UNION CAMP
CLEARING
RALLY POINT
FIGHTING AREA

ROAD NEAR WOODS

CUT:

WEST POINT PARADE GROUNDS

*

FADE IN:

1 EXT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA FIELD - DAY 1

OVER BLACK, SUPERIMPOSE:

MANASSAS, VIRGINIA, 1861

QUICK IMAGES:

CONFEDERATE CAVALRYMEN thunder along a wooded road.

UNION CAVALRYMEN, moving in the opposite direction, gallop toward victory or death.

CONFEDERATE ARTILLERYMEN tug a mule-drawn cannon across a wooden bridge; UNION ARTILLERY unlimber their GUNS on a hilltop. SUPERIMPOSE:

25 MILES SOUTHWEST OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

A NARRATOR speaks. From the tenor of her voice we can tell she is someone who is LOOKING BACK. (She is KATE.)

KATE (V.O.)

In 1861, Americans began a Civil War, and in that conflict more Americans died than would be killed in all of America's other wars, combined.

2 EXT. FIELD - UNION CAVALRY SIDE - DAY 2

TERRIFIED UNION INFANTRYMEN who have never known combat march forward, prodded by equally nervous officers. CONFEDERATE INFANTRYMEN march forward with a swagger.

KATE (V.O.)

The first great battle of that war occurred in northern Virginia, where 18,000 Union troops met an equal number of Confederates at a place the North called Bull Run and the South called Manassas.

ON HILLTOPS, the cannons FIRE.

Their shells EXPLODE in the soft rich earth, once farmland, now a killing field.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

Riding into the thunder and smoke is UNION CAVALRY under ROBERT SUMNER, a Lieutenant who is only 22 but already a man. (NOTE: The young age of most involved in this war is an accepted fact.) Robert is smart, brave, and a born leader.

Robert's keen eyes scan the chaos: he and his men are on a hill above a gentle slope down to a road lined with a split rail fence, then rising to an opposite hilltop, where he sees men in gray uniforms arriving. He shouts out to the company of Union Infantrymen who have hurried up beside his cavalry --

ROBERT

The fenced road is the key point!
Advance to it! We will screen you!

The infantrymen scramble downhill toward the fence and road. They are terrified and inexperienced, FIRING as they run... *

3 EXT. OPPOSITE HILLTOP, MANASSAS BATTLEFIELD - DAY

3

JOHN RHODES, also 22, arrives at the head of a CONFEDERATE CAVALRY UNIT. He is a Southern aristocrat; under his cultivated civility is a razor sharp mind and brilliant fighting skills.

KATE (V.O.)

Men on both sides predicted the war would end swiftly. That's not what happened.

Artillery is exploding all around him. Bullets, fired from the Union infantrymen, buzz through the air around them like heavy hornets.

JOHN

Dismount! Shelter the horses!

As his men obey him quickly, he uses his FIELD GLASSES to scan the field exactly as Robert did, and makes the same quick judgment, shouting to his SERGEANT above the explosions --

JOHN

The road is the fulcrum of the whole --

At that moment a wild shot from the Union lines slams into his Sergeant, tearing his arm right off his body.

4 ON THE UNION HILLTOP

4

The explosions from artillery are falling onto the Union infantry and cavalry. Robert shouts to LOCKWOOD, another Lieutenant beside him.

ROBERT

That's OUR cannon fire! They think we're rebels!

Through the smoke he sees the UNION ARTILLERY firing from a hill to his left; he snatches the American flag from the color bearer and gallops into the explosions, waving the flag --

A cannon shot EXPLODES in front of his horse, hurling Robert into the air and slamming him -- and the flag -- to the earth.

5 ON THE CONFEDERATE HILL

5

John stares at his bleeding, and armless, Sergeant. John is shocked -- but still a leader.

JOHN

Get him to the surgeons!

All around him his men -- the cavalry he rode up with, and the Confederate infantrymen who have followed -- are starting to waver under the barrage. Jon shouts above the din --

JOHN

The Yankees at the fence in the red shirts -- they're a regiment of firemen from New York! Brave -- but they've never faced BAYONETS!
FOLLOW ME!

He draws his SABRE and leads a charge through the staggering explosions and blinding smoke.

6 ON THE UNION HILL

6

Robert staggers to his feet, half blind, half deaf... he sees the flag... and LIFTS IT.

ROBERT

Follow me!

He runs toward the rail fence...

6A EXT. AT THE SPLIT RAIL FENCE - DAY 6A

The red-shirted Union infantrymen are reeling under artillery explosions that send men and fence rails flying. Then they hear the blood-curdling REBEL YELL, and emerging from the wall of smoke come John and his Confederates, charging.

It is a time of sheer butchery.

We TILT UP to a sky that was once peaceful and...

DISSOLVE TO:

7 EXT. WEST POINT - DAY 7

The United States Military Academy, West Point, stands solemn and stalwart in upstate New York. We SUPERIMPOSE:

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY, WEST POINT

3 1/2 MONTHS EARLIER

A column of cadets rides proudly across the parade ground, two by two. At the head of the column are the academy's two leading cadets: Robert and John, side by side, as brothers.

7A INT. STABLES - WEST POINT - DAY 7A

Young Cadets are in a line cleaning their SADDLES and EQUIPMENT. John Rhodes and Robert Sumner are placing their SABERS and TACK into WEAPONS RACKS.

JOHN *
You almost beat us. *

ROBERT *
(smiles) *
I let your team win because I *
didn't want to embarrass you. *

JOHN *
You let us win? -- *

ROBERT *
-- Yes, I hear from Colonel Kane *
you're going to graduate as the *
highest ranking cadet since Robert *
E. Lee, so it would've been *
shameful if my team whipped you. *

(CONTINUED)

John grins. Robert grins back -- two great friends sharing a moment. They put away their tack. John turns thoughtful -- *

JOHN

Robert, I need to tell you something -- since you're married to my sister, my family is yours, too. So is Point of Honor -- and its slaves.

ROBERT

You know how I feel about slavery.

JOHN

I hate it as much as you do. All the great Virginians detested it. Washington, Jefferson... Madison called it --

ROBERT

-- "America's original sin." Yes. Your great Virginians were all noble in thought, but they also owned slaves. Just like you.

John's eyes flash in defiance; Robert puts a hand on his shoulder.

ROBERT

I'm sorry. All this news about secession -- the willingness of these Southerners to destroy our nation -- it fills me with rage. *

JOHN

That's why I needed to talk to you. I need to tell you something --

A MESSENGER RIDER gallops in, shouting.

RIDER

-- Rebels in South Carolina have fired against the Federal Fort in Charleston Harbor!

The news stuns the cadets, who up until this moment have lived and breathed as brothers-in-arms.

8 EXT. ESTABLISHING LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA - DAY 8

Where the James River flows from the Blue Ridge Mountains sits a wealthy town, spread along the river bluffs.
SUPERIMPOSE:

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

Positioned in the most prominent spot above the river, overlooking the entire city, is a beautiful plantation:
Point of Honor.

And guests are arriving for a FABULOUS PARTY.

9 INT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - DAY 9 *

Three Rhodes sisters -- KATE, LORELEI, and ESTELLA -- are coming down the stairs. A STRING QUARTET PLAYS O.S. *

All three sisters are gorgeous. Kate, 24, tall, with flowing auburn hair, is the smart and stately leader, and is ready first.

KATE

C'mon, we can't keep our guests waiting. *

Lorelei, 22, with blonde hair, is a STUNNING BEAUTY -- the epitome of the cultured, elegant Antebellum "belle." She can charm anyone -- and has never lifted a finger in her life. *

Estella is 20, with a wild mane of auburn hair, and she exudes a fresh-faced exuberance. She is athletic, beautiful and impulsive. *

Kate turns and faces her two sisters, eyes Lorelei who looks lost in her thoughts. Kate can instantly read her -- *

KATE

It's all right to miss him.

LORELEI

To get married and have a week together before your husband goes back to West Point... it's not natural.

ESTELLA

Robert's unnatural -- he's a Yankee. *

(CONTINUED)

LORELEI
He's my husband!

ESTELLA
You know what they said last night
at the tavern? That --

LORELEI
You did not go to the tavern! You
were unchaperoned! --

The girls continue down the stairs and across the foyer -- *

ESTELLA
-- Down at the tavern somebody said
Yankees are just like hemorrhoids:
if they come down and go back up
they're no problem, but if they
come down and stay they're a pain
in the ass!

Both older sisters glare at Estella.

ESTELLA
Come on, laugh! Sister Lorelei has
a husband, Sister Kate has said no
to ten proposals, and poor me, I
can't keep a boyfriend!

LORELEI
You have plenty of boyfriends, just
none you want for more than a
night!

ESTELLA
If God didn't want me to sample
men, then why did he provide them
in such variety?

As they are about to enter the front parlor, ABBY intercepts *
them. Abby is 24, beautiful herself, though she wears a *
housekeeper's clothes; she's trying to get a word with Kate. *

ABBY
Miz Kate, I need a word with you,
it's really --

KATE *
(mild) *
-- Not now, Abby. *

9A INT. RHODES HOUSE - PARLOR - SAME 9A *

They walk into the front parlor where they find RALSTON RHODES staring out the window, lost in thought, in his own private mystery. Ralston is in his late 50s, charming and flawed, rugged and brave. He is the head of the Rhodes family. The kind of man other men follow unquestioningly into battle. He's a soldier first; he never fully bought into his role as a southern aristocrat. The sisters fawn over him; they adore their father. *

LORELEI

Daddy! You look so handsome!

ESTELLA

All the women will swoon. Even the ones you haven't slept with yet!

LORELEI

Estella!

ESTELLA

(mocking)
Lorelei!

RALSTON

I'm not up for this, Kate.

KATE

(kissing him)
Yes, you are. Happy birthday,
Daddy. Abby... the door!

Abby moves to the double doors and performs the ritual of opening them for a grand entrance, revealing...

10 INT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - BALL ROOM - DAY 10 *

An opulent room full of aristocratic GUESTS all applaud at the entrance of Ralston, escorted by his gorgeous daughters, as a string quartet PLAYS a fanfare. The Guests wish him "Happy Birthday!", the men backslapping him. Ralston is gracious but dour; not a social animal. The sisters, in contrast, are all smiles, gracefully working the room.

Abby stands watching from the fringe of the party as Kate greets hoop-skirted ladies and stately gentlemen with equal grace. The FRENCH ARTIST who is working at a canvas, painting the gathering, turns to kiss her hand.

(CONTINUED)

KATE	MONSIEUR BOTANCOURT	
<i>Monsieur Botancourt! Comment</i>		*
<i>ça va? La peinture, c'est</i>		*
<i>merveilleux.</i>	<i>Mademoiselle Rhodes, quel</i>	*
	<i>plaisir de vous voir.</i>	*
<i>J'aime l'utilisation de la</i>		*
<i>couleur.</i>	<i>Il est loin d'être fini.</i>	*

ABBY
(approaching)
Miss Kate, I really need to --

KATE
-- Abby, please fetch Monsieur
Botancourt a glass of wine. *Vous*
préférez le vin rouge, Monsieur?

*
*

MONSIEUR BOTANCOURT
Rouge, s'il vous plaît!

*

Abby hurries off toward the kitchen. Kate continues on into the next room where she sees BYRNE MURPHY, 25, a handsome, restrained and intelligent admirer of Kate. He takes her hand and kisses it --

BYRNE
Miss Rhodes.

KATE
(flirtatiously)
Mr. Murphy.

BYRNE
I was hoping that you and I might
take a private walk later.

KATE
To do what?

BYRNE
Talk about the future.

She has no doubt what he means. But another aristocrat, CRADDOCK, 50s, bulls his way between them.

CRADDOCK
Miss Rhodes, has your father agreed
to my price on that river land?

Kate gives Byrne a glance of promise; he steps away to give her room to deal with Craddock.

KATE

Mr. Craddock, sir, I certainly will get you an answer. It's just that... Daddy has been... somewhat reticent to respond.

10A IN THE KITCHEN 10A

Abby hurries past her sister, PHOEBE, 19, holding a serving tray.

PHOEBE

(anxious whisper)
Did she say?! What'd she say?!

ABBY

She said boo-coo blah-blah! I'll ask her, don't worry!

10B BACK IN THE BALL ROOM 10B *

AMONG THE GUESTS, Craddock towers over Kate, who is not the least bit ruffled.

CRADDOCK

You approached me and I gave you my number! If I don't get an answer today, I'll find other buyers!

Meanwhile, Estella walks directly into a group of 19 year-old men smoking CIGARS. Their leader is CHARLES STOREY, a charming local boy; Estella confronts him in apparent anger.

ESTELLA

Charlie Storey, are you smoking TOBACCO?! In my HOUSE?!

CHARLIE

Not if it offends you, Estella. Though this is tobacco from your plantation!

She grabs the cigar from his fingers, takes a deep puff and blows smoke into the faces of the young men.

ESTELLA

I'll let it pass. This time.

She keeps the cigar and continues flirting.

ACROSS THE ROOM, Kate talks on with Craddock --

(CONTINUED)

CRADDOCK
Reticent? Why is he reticent?

KATE
I could only guess that he feels
the price too high.
(then; as if remembering)
Oh, he mentioned something about
the land... being on a flood
plain...?

Craddock blanches. Kate smiles, charming and calm... but all
calculated might underneath.

IN A CORNER OF THE ROOM, Lorelei, the married sister, stands
quietly withdrawn. She is stunningly beautiful, and the
young men there all stare at her in awe and longing. But she
is touching the wedding ring on her hand and longing for her
husband. Her father appears behind her, hugging her
tenderly.

RALSTON
I love all my children. But you
most remind me of your mother.

She turns, smiles, and hugs him.

LORELEI
When I met Robert I couldn't
believe how powerfully I loved him.
Then I realized how much he is like
you!

RALSTON
(eyes twinkling)
Hopefully not too much. Play me
that tune your mother liked so
well.

He abruptly shoves the Piano Player off the bench.

RALSTON
Out of the way, boy!

Lorelei sits down and begins to play beautifully.

Ralston listens; emotions rise in him, and he turns quickly
and goes into his study, closing the door. *

All three Rhodes girls see this, and it tugs at their hearts. *

13 EXT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - FRONT DRIVE - DAY 13

A handsome slave, ELIJAH, 25, runs up to the front porch. He exudes intelligence, strength and mystery.

14 INT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - BALL ROOM - DAY 14

Elijah catches Kate's eye through the windows. The gravity on his face makes her step outside.

Lorelei notices Kate and Elijah...

FROM ESTELLA'S POV, we see Elijah hand Kate a LETTER. And then he says something to her quietly. Whatever it is, she's STUNNED. She nods, dismisses Elijah and moves back inside...

Kate walks into the room -- right across the center of it -- a serious expression on her face. Estella who is flirting with another Young Man sees her first, turns out of the conversation. Then Lorelei sees Kate's look and instantly recognizes something's wrong. She stops playing.

Her stopping draws the attention of everyone in the room --

KATE

The South Carolinians have fired on
Fort Sumter in open war.

A stunned silence; then Estella turns to the FIDDLE PLAYER and urges him on --

ESTELLA

(excited)
C'mon...

The FIDDLE PLAYER jumps into a fast, spirited rendition of Dixie, and everyone in the room begin to WHOOP AND CHEER.

CHARLIE

We're gonna whip their tails!

Lorelei is pale, silent amid the exuberance. Her husband is a Northern soldier.

Kate walks out of the room, through the excited crowd, back onto the broad lawn by the river. *

15 OMITTED

15

15A EXT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - RIVER SIDE LAWN - DAY 15A *
Kate stands alone and begins to read the letter that will *
change the whole world as she knows it. *

CUT TO:

16 INT. WEST POINT - CHAPEL - DAY 16
The chapel is full of cadets. Except for the longer
haircuts, these young men look like West Point cadets have
always looked. Lockwood and Robert are whispering --

LOCKWOOD
We can't let this divide us.

ROBERT
It already has. For the first time
ever the Southerners are on that
side, and we're on this one.

He glances toward the cadets across the center aisle, and
John and the cadets from the South.

ROBERT
The deep South has no chance
without Virginia and North Carolina
on their side. John is the key.
What he does, the other Virginians
will follow.

VOICE
Attention!

The cadets snap into ranks of razor-sharp precision.

VOICE
Places!

Moving as a single giant machine of identical parts, the
cadets sit. Kane rises in front of the corps.

KANE
Gentlemen, Fort Sumter has been
attacked by forces of armed
rebellion. Now seven states have
claimed that they have the right to
secede from our great Union.

The Cadets from the South look proud; others, including
Robert and John, are grave.

(CONTINUED)

KANE

Secession is not only
unconstitutional -- it is treason.
It is time for us to stand and
fight.

CALHOUN, a cadet from South Carolina, rises.

CALHOUN

Colonel, permission to speak!

KANE

Granted.

CALHOUN

I say: Damn the United States of
America! And God bless the great
and sovereign state of South
Carolina!

OTHER CADETS

...and Mississippi! ...Georgia!
...Alabama!

Calhoun leads the other Deep Southerners out of the chapel,
stopping by to whisper to John...

CALHOUN

Get on board, Rhodes, it's gonna be
a helluva ride.

As the last of resigning cadets step into the outside
sunshine, the chapel is left in somber silence. There are
still a fair number of cadets on the right side of the aisle.
John Rhodes rises to his feet.

JOHN

Colonel. Permission to speak?

John speaks in the soft accent of Virginia -- barely an
accent at all compared to the drawl of South Carolina.

KANE

Granted, Cadet Rhodes.

JOHN

I respect the right of my brothers
in the Cadet Corps to make their
own decisions, but as a Southerner
myself, I apologize for any remarks
made against the United States or
the men who defend it with honor.

(CONTINUED)

SILENCE. Then APPLAUSE from other cadets in admiration for John's easy grace and loyalty. John waves the applause off -- embarrassed by it.

Kane watches, in a mysterious and threatening way. The approach of war thrills him to his core.

JOHN

I don't believe there is a man here
who believes me to be a coward.
All of us are warriors, and we have
seen this day coming. *

John looks around at his fellow cadets; his eyes come to rest on Robert, sitting with others from the North.

JOHN

A week ago I wrote a letter to my
sisters in Virginia; they should be
receiving it today. I would like
to read a copy of that letter.

From within his tunic he withdraws a handwritten letter.
ROBERT WATCHES IN RAPT ATTENTION, hanging on the moment...

JOHN

(reading)

"With a full understanding of the
profound consequences of my
actions, I hereby renounce the
institution of slavery, and direct
my family... *

INTERCUT: KATE, AT POINT OF HONOR, reading the letter...

JOHN

...that all our slaves be
immediately and eternally...

AT WEST POINT, John continues to read his copy aloud...

JOHN

...set free.

The place suddenly explodes in cheers. John's action and his announcement stir the others emotionally, especially Robert, whose eyes shine with admiration for his best friend --

ROBERT

Yes!

This adds fuel to the other cadets' jubilation.

(CONTINUED)

LOCKWOOD
THREE CHEERS FOR JOHN RHODES!

But Robert -- the only other cadet that the others instinctively follow -- stops him with a sudden gesture; he sees that John is somber. John folds the letter away...

JOHN
And as a Virginian, I resign my commission in the Army of the United States and will return to defend my home against any aggression brought against her.

Suddenly everyone is sitting in stunned silence.

JOHN
God bless Virginia. God bless the United States. And God bless every one of you.

He walks out in absolute silence followed by the other Virginians. Robert sits frozen and watches him go. Surprisingly, Colonel Kane is smiling --

KANE
Gentlemen! We trained for war and now war is here!

And suddenly the smile is off Kane's face; his moods change with the suddenness of a genius... or a madman.

KANE
And we will crush the traitors who oppose us!

17 EXT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - RIVER SIDE LAWN - DAY 17 *

Kate stands holding the letter with trembling hands, knowing her whole world, the only world she has ever known, is about to explode. *

Lorelei comes out onto the lawn, the look on Kate's face telling her something is very wrong. *

LORELEI
Kate...? What's the matter? *

Kate puts the letter away, not yet ready to face such a reality.

(CONTINUED)

LORELEI

Is it John --

*

KATE

He's all right. But I need to
speak with Daddy. Tell our guests
we must cut short our celebration --

*

*

LORELEI

Kate, we can't --

KATE

TELL THEM, LORELEI!

Lorelei, worried, moves back to the party to do as Kate says.
Kate looks pensive.

*

*

18 EXT. THE FIELDS - DAY

18

A dozen slaves are plowing for the spring planting, lead by
VIRGIL, 35, who is known as the Landsman for his skill with
agriculture. He has stopped and all the slaves are gathered
around him, whispering; but the move quickly back to work as
CUTLER, the white overseer, comes galloping up angrily.

Cutler is 30, dark and powerfully built; and he is
threatening. He strides to Virgil and glares.

CUTLER

Reckon y'all heard the news 'bout
that fight down in South Carolina?

VIRGIL

Yes, sir, we heard.

Cutler puts one hand on the whip at his left hip and one hand
on the butt of his pistol on his right hip, and shouts out --

CUTLER

ON THE ROAD OUTSIDE THE SWANN
PLANTATION, TWO RUNAWAYS ARE
HANGING FROM TREES!! You want to
be like them, listen to the
Yankees.

19 INT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - FOYER - DAY

19

The last PARTY GUESTS exit out the land side door of the
house, the door softly closing behind them. Kate enters from
the river side and moves into the --

*

*

*

19A DINING ROOM

19A *

The big tables are laden with FOOD meant to be served to all the guests who have now all left. Kate stares at it -- the richly, comfortable world she has always know suddenly and profoundly changing. *

Kate is so agitated by her secret dilemma that she hasn't noticed Abby and Phoebe have moved into the room behind her -- *

ABBY

Miz Kate! I'm so sorry to trouble you but -- Mr. Cutler, he says he's gonna sell my sister to the Swann Plantation!

Kate turns to the two slave sisters and stiffens.

KATE

Cutler is the overseer, he does not own this plantation. But your information is correct, Phoebe has been sold.

PHOEBE

But you can't! I was born here!

Kate is not accustomed to back talk; her eyes flash.

KATE

We need a shoemaker; you lack that skill so we're trading Swann for one.

PHOEBE

But --

ABBY

Please, Miz Kate! I'll make her learn!

KATE

That's what you said a year ago. She moons over Elijah and won't keep her mind on her task.

ABBY

She's seventeen, she --

PHOEBE

You can't sell me! You CAN'T --

Abby SLAPS Phoebe sharply across the face!

(CONTINUED)

ABBY

Don't ever speak to the Missus that way!

Kate glares at Phoebe, and walks out. Phoebe begins to cry.

PHOEBE

How could you -- ?

ABBY

She could have you whipped! What's wrong with you?!

PHOEBE

I'm just so scared! The Swanns hang slaves for lookin' at 'em wrong!

ABBY

That's just a story they tell to scare people! I'll keep trying -- and you keep your mouth SHUT!

20 INT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - RALSTON RHODES' STUDY - DAY 20

Ralston Rhodes sits in his study, smoking a CIGAR and nursing a WHISKEY, lost in thought. He looks up as Kate slips in.

RALSTON

You close the deal with Craddock?

KATE

He took seven.

RALSTON

Seven? I'd'a paid fifteen! But it may be a bad time to buy. So war's finally started. The damn fools.

Kate holds his hand --

KATE

Daddy... I just got a letter from John. He wants us to...
(she can barely say it)
...to free the slaves.

Ralston's eyes are steel. Kate searches them, her concern growing, as he doesn't react in the disbelief she expected.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

This will destroy our family! With the coming war, our neighbors will count us traitors if --

RALSTON

-- Damn the neighbors. We live by our own will.

KATE

But Daddy...! Without the slaves... we'll lose Point of Honor! And everything else we know.

Ralston turns to the window, his back to her, lost in some mysterious place.

RALSTON

Listen to John. It is his decision.

Kate is stunned, completely baffled at her father's reaction.

KATE

Why? Why is it his decision?!

RALSTON

(all steel)
Because I said it is.
(beat)
I'm going bird hunting.

KATE

Hunting? Now?! When will you return?

RALSTON

Once I shoot something.

He moves out the back door, leaving Kate all alone. On her shoulders are all her family's responsibilities -- and its deepest mysteries.

21 EXT. WEST POINT - STABLES - DAY 21

John, BLANCHARD (another Cadet) and the other Southerners are saddling their horses for their ride south to join the Confederate Army. Their spirits are high.

(CONTINUED)

BLANCHARD

You make me proud to be a
Virginian. But why give away your
slaves? We will win this war.

Before John can respond, Robert enters the stables, spots
John and moves to him.

ROBERT

John... that was the bravest speech
I ever heard. And the dumbest.
Help me understand this -- how can
you renounce slavery and then join
the side fighting to defend it?!

JOHN

That's precisely it, I am not
fighting to defend slavery! When I
get home I'll raise a regiment in a
single day, and most of the men who
volunteer won't own slaves!

ROBERT

But they hope someday they will.
Read what's in the Confederate
Constitution. This war is all
about slavery. Don't pretend that
it isn't!

JOHN

You and I agree on this: slavery is
a stench in the nostrils of God.
That's the very reason I made my
decision. To conduct myself with
honor!

ROBERT

John -- this is lunacy. *

JOHN

War is lunacy. And yet everyone is
cheering for it.

John turns his back on his brother-in-law, and best friend.
He mounts his horse, and stares down at Robert.

Robert is mystified -- but the steel in his soul is every bit
as sharp as John's. He knows a line has been drawn.

ROBERT

Be careful, John.
(beat)
Tell Lorelei I love her.

(CONTINUED)

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21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

JOHN

Come tell her yourself. If you
come in peace, it will be your
home, too. But if you come in war,
you and I will fight.

Robert holds John's stare -- until John turns and rides off.

22 OMITTED 22

23 INT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - FRONT PARLOR - DAY 23 *

Kate enters the parlor, where Lorelei and Estella are waiting *
for her, anxiously.

ESTELLA

Kate, are you possessed?! To throw
our guests out of a perfectly good
party...?

LORELEI

It's the letter. Something in that
letter from John.

KATE

Our brother has ordered that our
family slaves be set free.

It is the most shocking news that the sisters could imagine.

ESTELLA

That's impossible. It would
destroy everything -- even for the
slaves themselves!

LORELEI

It will give them freedom. And
freedom is everything.

Estella turns on Lorelei, stunned.

ESTELLA

You -- what?! First you marry a
Yankee -- and then start talking
like one?!

LORELEI

Perhaps I have learned to listen.

(CONTINUED)

ESTELLA

Then listen to this! John can't
free the slaves! They belong to
Daddy.

KATE

Daddy insists we do what John says.

LORELEI

Why would Daddy do that?

KATE

Something happened... I don't know
what. It's a secret between them.

*
*

Kate stares out the window, watching her father ride away.

The former Cadets are in new blue uniforms; their former
Cadet UNIFORMS and GEAR are folded neatly in front of each
man as Kane lectures them.

KANE

To this point we have studied
classical military doctrine. Now
you will experience the realities
of war...

Kane is using a map to illustrate his points.

KANE

(condescending)

Starting with the very deliberate
decision-making of President
Lincoln and his commanders. But
eventually even he will recognize
the need to be decisive.

*
*
*

(smiling)

And when that happens we will lay
waste to their towns, their farms,
their homes themselves. This,
gentlemen, will be a satisfying
war.

ROBERT

Colonel...

*

KANE

Yes?

*
*

ROBERT

If the goal is to be decisive...

Kane turns in surprise to Robert -- and Robert stares at him with a confidence and a certainty that commands attention...

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Strategically, Virginia's the most important state in this conflict. What if there was a way to cut the main rail line leading up into Richmond?

OFF KANE. Intrigued. Wants to know more.

25 EXT. ESTABLISHING TOWN OF LYNCHBURG - THREE DAYS LATER 25

Lynchburg is a river town. Here among shops and buildings, we favor SWANN'S TAVERN, the nerve center of the town.
SUPERIMPOSE:

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

25A EXT. DOWNTOWN LYNCHBURG - DAY 25A

We follow the steps of MALCOLM SWANN, 45, a big and menacing man, toward the tavern he owns. He is also the mayor. Cutler hurries up to catch him, and speaks in hushed tones. *

CUTLER

Swann --

SWANN

-- Mayor, when we're in public!

CUTLER

Mayor. I need my money for the Phoebe sale.

SWANN

I pay on delivery.

CUTLER

That's not our deal! You want to buy slaves for less than they're worth, I get my cut up front!

SWANN

I heard something makes me think there might not be a sale.

(CONTINUED)

He mutters something under his breath to Cutler, who reacts in anger and disbelief.

CUTLER
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

Cutler stalks away furiously. Swann enters the tavern he owns.

Swann's gaze sweeps the tavern; the bartender has already poured him a DRINK. Swann speaks loudly, a man who loves to speechify --

SWANN
The Yankees and King Lincoln say
they won't let us go? I hope they
prove they're as stupid as I know
them to be! Let them come down
here! Let them learn what Southern
steel is all about!!

The LOCALS ALL CHEER. Except for one. IN A CORNER sits young GARLAND RHODES, 20, the handsome, dashing -- and drunk -- black sheep of the Rhodes family.

Garland doesn't give a shit about all this talk. He gets up and walks to the bar --

GARLAND
Swann, if you've finished
pontificating, could you pour me
another?

Swann, insulted in front of the others, moves to Garland and sets his BOTTLE on the table.

SWANN
I heard a rumor today. A Blanchard
boy over in Madison Heights goes to
West Point with your brother, John.
Blanchard wrote his Mama that your
brother made a big speech up there -
- that he aims to free your slaves!

This brings a sudden silence to the tavern.

SWANN
That true? Speak up, Boy!

This is news to Garland. We see it in his eyes. But he can also believe his brother might do it.

GARLAND

Who'd be dumb enough to believe that?

Garland pours himself another drink. Swann presses on --

SWANN

Anybody who'd free slaves now would have to be a fool. Or a traitor.

With a movement shocking in its quickness, Garland BREAKS THE BOTTLE ACROSS SWANN'S SKULL, then holds the BROKEN GLASS TO HIS NECK. The burly bartender springs at Garland with the CLUB he uses to slam drunks, but Garland's left hand is as quick as his right -- he stops the bartender with a DERRINGER pointed at his face.

GARLAND

Nobody calls a Rhodes either of those names and lives. Understood?

Swann nods. No choice here. Garland lets him go. Drops the bottle -- but holds the derringer -- and downs his drink --

GARLAND

Gentlemen.

Garland pushes past them -- no one will mess with him -- and exits the bar. But the men he leaves behind? They are all DISGRUNTLED AND VERY UNHAPPY.

27 INT. VIRGIL'S SLAVE CABIN - POINT OF HONOR - DAY 27

Elijah, Virgil, Abby and several other slaves have gathered in private. Other slaves linger outside. They are sobered by all that has just happened.

ELIJAH

War. Maybe war means Freedom... I couldn't even say it before. And I'm almost afraid to say it now.

VIRGIL

Don't! Cause it ain't here! But maybe we should go, all of us, tonight. Slip into the mountains, hide days, travel north by the stars. Ohio, maybe.

(CONTINUED)

ABBY

We've got little ones and old ones.
We can't leave 'em, and we can't
travel fast with 'em. Cutler and
the others, they'd follow on horses
and hang us -- or worse.

They both instinctively look to Elijah; they count on his
wisdom. He takes a minute, then makes a decision.

ELIJAH

Come with me.

He leads them OUTSIDE and nods to the distant blue mountains.

ELIJAH

You see that gap, between Sharp Top
and Round Top? That's the way to
place they call...

(whispers)

...Rainbow. A farm. People there
help slaves. That's what they say.

Phoebe runs up, TERRIFIED --

PHOEBE

There's a mob of men coming up the
road with guns and knives!

ELIJAH

Get the children and the old folks
out into the trees!

Abby runs for the main house. Virgil and Elijah pick up
their work tools -- an axe and a scythe -- ready for the
worst -- as they head out --

Kate, Lorelei and Estella are in their father's study, trying
to confront harsh new realities. Kate takes ledgers from
their father's desk.

KATE

We have to know what we're facing.
Lorelei, you need to study these.

LORELEI

Those are Daddy's ledgers!

KATE

But he and John have made them our
problem.

Estella is paying no attention. She's fiddling with some
CARTRIDGES on Ralston's desk. SPINNING them around, in her
own world. She then examines one of his KNIVES. *

Kate PLUNKS the LEDGERS down in front of Lorelei. *

LORELEI

I don't -- *

KATE

-- Just go through them and see
what they say. *

Abby bursts in, frightened -- *

ABBY

-- There's a mob comin' up the
hill! *

They are all alone. The sisters move quickly to the windows;
Abby's right -- a mob of people, led by Mayor Swann, are
moving up the road to Point of Honor.

29 EXT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - DAY 29

The mob, led by Swann, and with Cutler in its ranks, moves up
to the house and stops; the mansion alone is imposing -- and
so are the three women stepping out onto its porch.

KATE

Mornin', Mayor! It'll take us
awhile to feed all of y'all, but
give us awhile and we'll have tea
and cakes for everybody!

What they don't see is the small DERRINGER PISTOL she's
holding behind her back. *

SWANN

We didn't come for social visiting!

ESTELLA

Then what did you come for?

SWANN

We hear you're freeing your slaves.
With Virginia going to war, we
demand to know your sympathies!

(CONTINUED)

ESTELLA
You demand? Of a Rhodes?

SWANN
Hush up, silly girl, and let your
sisters talk. *

ESTELLA
Oh, he called me a silly girl! Boo
hoo hoo...

Estella buries her face in her hands in theatrical tears and reaches behind the door, lifting a double-barrel shotgun. She fires a blast -- KABOOOOM!!! -- over the mayor's head, making everybody in the crowd flinch; then she lowers the gun at Swann.

ESTELLA
Get away from my porch or I'll blow
your goddamn head off.

LORELEI
Estella! Put that down!

ESTELLA
I will. After I've shot off his
face! "Silly girl"...?!

KATE
You put that down!

Estella lowers the weapon, but several men in the crowd put their hands to pistols in their belts.

SWANN
Tell us -- you're gonna free your
slaves? When Virginia is preparing
to fight for its right to keep
them?

Now the sisters understand how deep this trouble is.

LORELEI
(conciliatory)
Now, Mayor Swann, if you'd lower
your guns, we could --

Kate CUTS HER OFF, having no compromise here --

KATE

-- As I understand it, Mr. Swann,
the state of Virginia claims that
slaveholders have the right to make
their own choices about slavery.
So will we make our choice!

*
*
*

Swann doesn't like being matched against these three clever women. Cutler stands at the side of the mob, watching the sisters get the best of Swann.

SWANN

So your family is choosing to
sympathize with our enemies?!

IN THE SHADOWS OF THE TREE GROVES near the front drive, the slaves watch; some of the children are trembling. Virgil silently taps their mothers to lead the children away. Abby looks at Elijah, who grips his axe and watches silently.

AT THE FRONT OF THE MANSION, it's turning ugly, the mob yelling, ready to explode. Kate has a hand behind her back; we see now that she's holding one of her father's pistols.

ESTELLA

(whispers to Lorelei)
I'll shoot the mayor first. You
run for more shells, they're in the
cabinet.

LORELEI

(whispered)
You won't have time to reload!

ESTELLA

(whispered)
Yeah, I will, I'm gonna shoot him
in the pecker, that'll freeze the
others.

Kate answers Swann -- and the mob --

KATE

If Virginia is invaded, you will be
fighting behind us!

Lorelei looks UNCOMFORTABLE. Kate is cocking her pistol. Cutler leans near two tavern thugs beside him and hisses --

CUTLER

They ain't gonna talk their way
outta this!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CUTLER (CONT'D)

Let's shoot all three of 'em at the same time, and in the riot ain't nobody can say who done it!

They are reaching for their pistols when Kate, Lorelei and Estella lift their eyes to the distance and smile; the whole mob freezes:

AT THE GATES OF THE PLANTATION, John Rhodes has just appeared, riding a stallion at the head of a group of eight Confederate cavalry, hoofs pounding, their battle flags flying in the wind.

They wear new Confederate uniforms. They are professional soldiers. They thunder up between the porch and the mob. John glances at his sisters' faces. It tells him everything. He turns and faces the mob --

JOHN

The threat is not what we do with our slaves. The threat is the Union army assembling across the Potomac to burn Virginia to the ground! Will you allow that?

SWANN

Never, sir! Never!

JOHN

Every man willing to fight must go home, tell his family good-bye, and ready his horse and his weapons. We ride in the morning!

SHOUTS FROM MOB

We are with you! Let 'em come!
We'll give it to 'em!

The mob reacts with a whole different fervor, their anger turning against the Union as they begin to disperse.

And the slaves, who have seen everything, move back to their cabins as John dismounts and hugs his sisters.

30 EXT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - FRONT VERANDA - TWILIGHT 30 *

Out here, in the relative privacy of the veranda, Kate whirls on John, unleashing her fury. *

KATE

Do you have any idea of the danger you have brought upon us?!

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
I've thought of little else.

KATE
Then that is worse! You know, and yet you've done it anyway?!

JOHN
Our slaves. They are people. They are us.

KATE
Freeing the slaves will mean the end of Point of Honor.

JOHN
It won't. You will manage, Kate. You are the strongest and smartest person I know.

Kate stares at him, instinctively knowing there is more to this story and John will not tell her now.

31 EXT. POINT OF HONOR PLANTATION - DAY 31

ALL 15 SLAVES -- the men like Elijah and Virgil, the old ones, even the children -- all gathered around the rear porch. Except for Christmas and Easter they don't ever gather like this. They're tense, uncertain.

Behind them is the overseer, Cutler, on his horse looking VERY CONCERNED as well.

John leads Kate, Lorelei and Estella out from the house. John looks determined. Kate is steadfast. Lorelei and Estella look sick with worry and fear, but say nothing --

The slaves look uneasy as John now addresses them --

JOHN
Most of you were born here, as all of us were. We had no choice in that matter. My mother, and most of my ancestors, and most of yours, are buried on this ground.

John gestures toward the fenced-in family cemetery fifty yards from the house; the Rhodes markers are stone, the slave markers are wood -- but they are all buried together.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

I have always expected to die here,
at Point of Honor. That is my
choice. But where you lived or
died has not been your choice.
Until today.

Elijah is the first to understand, and the shift of his eyes
is like the seismic shift of the earth: what did he just
say?

JOHN

I -- and my family -- hereby
renounce the institution of
slavery.

We play the faces: Elijah... Abby... the other slaves... and
Kate, Lorelei, Estella... hearing words more shocking and far-
reaching than any they could have imagined.

JOHN

All our slaves are immediately and
eternally set free.

John takes a breath, looking at the faces staring at him --

JOHN

You are all free.

ADOLPHUS, nearly deaf, sees the women around him tremble, and
the men go stiff. In his ancient voice, he bellows --

ADOLPHUS

What?! What did she say?!

Abby can barely get out the words...

ABBY

He says we free.

ADOLPHUS

WHAT??

ABBY

Free!

ADOLPHUS

Free to what??!!

Abby looks into his eyes, slowly mouthing the word:

ABBY

Free.

(CONTINUED)

Adolphus begins to weep. Elijah takes in this news. It is almost incomprehensible. VIRGIL, 40s, looks around. For all of them this is surreal. Not believable. The greatest weight imaginable suddenly lifted.

And the Rhodes siblings have never before felt such shame of being slave owners as they feel at that moment, seeing the slave's reaction to the moment of freedom.

But for Cutler it is different. Rage burns in his eyes, and a hatred -- directed toward John and his sisters even more than to the slaves. He glares murderously at them, then storms away on his horse.

Phoebe falls against Abby, crying with relief. Most of the other slaves seemed stunned.

VIRGIL
Where do we go, sir?

JOHN *
I'm not shipping you off to Liberia *
like others have, if that's what *
you're asking. *

But John has no answer for what they're going to do instead. *
Abby looks to Kate for an answer -- *

ABBY *
Miss Kate...? *

Kate glances toward her dazed sisters before responding --

KATE
You may stay here as long as you
wish. We will pay you wages.

JOHN *
(to the slaves)
What you do now... is up to you.

And with that, he turns and heads back inside the house.

The sisters look about at the faces of the slaves, and then move back into the house also.

Off Virgil, Abby and Elijah, surrounded by the stunned emotions of the other now-freed slaves, find themselves looking at each other. Freedom! What will it mean?

32 EXT. FAMILY CEMETERY OF POINT OF HONOR - DAY 32 *

Kate walks across the lawn toward the slave side of the house where the family grave site sits. As she gets closer, she sees -- *

John standing there. Talking with Ralston. It's SERIOUS. Their backs are to her. They don't see her. And Kate cannot tell what they are talking about -- but it is clearly important and private. *

Kate watches them for a beat, then turns and leaves them alone. *

33-34 OMITTED 33-34 *

35 INT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - PARLOR - DAY 35

Lorelei is paging through the LEDGER BOOK for the plantation. She has a quill pen and is adding and subtracting numbers. And the work is both new to her and very anxiety provoking.

Kate enters with a silver tray with some glasses of tea.

KATE

Tea. It may be bitter -- I never made it myself before today.

LORELEI

I could use something stiffer. *
These books are a total mess. I *
don't think Daddy's made a proper *
entry -- ever. *

Kate passes her a glass, looks down at the columns of scripted numbers.

KATE

But regardless, we have some *
savings, right...? Don't we? *

LORELEI

Not enough. Daddy is a soldier, *
not a farmer. After last year's *
drought and our debts... If we *
don't sell this year's crop, we'll *
have to sell some land -- *

KATE

Sell land? We will never do that! *

(CONTINUED)

Lorelei stares at her sister, FRUSTRATED --

LORELEI
Never is now. And the war is, too.

Kate stares out the window, then turns back to her,
determined in her thinking --

*
*

KATE
It will be over by harvest time.

LORELEI
What makes you think the war is
going to be short?

KATE
The Southern army is made up of men
who grew up riding and hunting and
living on the land. Against
factory workers shipped down by
train from the textile plants?
We'll slaughter them by the
wagonload.

*

LORELEI
(stung; horrified)
Men like Robert?

Kate looks over at her sister, sees her fear, and realizes
the horrible dilemma they are both in. She SOFTENS --

KATE
Robert a trained soldier -- the
pride of West Point. He won't let
you become a widow.

*
*

OFF LORELEI. Hoping Kate's words are true.

36 EXT. WOODS - DAY

36

Garland and BEN HOWLAND, also 20, are riding their horses
through the trees.

GARLAND
There's one thing about horses I
could never figure out.

BEN
What's that?

(CONTINUED)

GARLAND

The best speed to ride at when
you're hung over. Walking is herky-
jerky and too slow when you want to
get home --

BEN

-- Trotting is worse. Too much up
and down in the saddle.

GARLAND

Now a gallop is smooth -- a gallop
gets you home but my stomach gets --

Garland suddenly stops talking --

BEN

Your stomach gets...?

Garland is suddenly NOT casual anymore. He throws his hand
up for Ben to shut up. Reins his horse to the left.

BEN (CONT'D)

(reaching for his rifle)

You see a deer?

Garland shakes his head no. Not a Buck. He quickly rides
behind a thicket of brush and trees. Dismounts. Grabs his
horse by the muzzle -- to SILENCE IT. Ben follows his lead,
does the same.

Garland leaves his horse and quickly scrambles up a nearby
embankment. He peers over the top of it. *

GARLAND'S POV - FOUR UNION PICKETS *

About 100 yards away through the trees, FOUR Union Soldiers --
advance pickets -- are dismounted from their horses and are
standing there passing around a BOTTLE OF WHISKY. They are
joking, and TWIGS are SNAPPING where they stand. *

Ben scrambles up the embankment and his eyes go wide in
DISBELIEF. *

BEN (CONT'D)

It can't be.

GARLAND

(quiet and fierce)

Shhhh.

The Union Soldiers are oblivious. Ben looks at Garland. *

What the hell do we do?

(CONTINUED)

Garland may be a carouser, but he's also a trained Southern hunter, tracker and woodsman who knows how to handle himself in a tough scrape.

The four Union horsemen stop. Shit. Did they hear them. The lead soldier, TOM WINTHROP, looks all around.

Garland and Ben are silent as stone. Garland is brushing his horse's muzzle to keep her quiet.

BEN
If we double back, they're gonna
see us. How do we get around 'em?

GARLAND
We don't.

OFF GARLAND. A plan forming.

36A EXT. PICKET CLEARING - DAY

36A *

The four Union Soldiers are getting drunk, bored out of their skulls by the mindless picket/scouting duty. They are laughing and joking. KEEGAN, 23, a fat soldier, is telling the other three some sort of tall tale --

KEEGAN
Then I said to her, "how are you
going to get home?" And she said,
"who says I want to?" And then she
put my hand right on her --

Suddenly, he stops, hearing something -- HORSES -- as they all try to process the sound when --

TWO HORSES EXPLODE OUT OF THE TREES, BLOWING RIGHT THROUGH THEIR CLEARING -- except from the Union POV it appear that the horses are RIDERLESS.

HUH?!?! WHAT THE HELL?! In their confusion all they can do is STARE. Keegan drops the bottle.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The horses aren't riderless at all -- Garland and Ben hang from the side of their horses as they gallop through -- shielded by the flanks of the horse from sight.

Before the Union soldiers even know what's hit them, Garland and Ben ARE GONE.

WINTHROP
(flabbergasted)
Get them! Get them!!

The jump on their HORSES and ride after them.

37 IN THE TREES

37

The foliage is dense. It's hard to see. Flashes of riders picketing through the trees. Garland and Ben are back up in their saddles riding like the experts they are.

*
*

38 GARLAND AND BEN 38
Splash through a creek. Climbing out on the far side. They
turn around some TREES. DOUBLING BACK. *

39 THE UNION RIDERS 39
Gallop down to the stream and RIDE ON, looking for the
Southerners, who now PASS THROUGH FRAME behind them --
completely unseen. *

40 OMITTED 40 *

41 EXT. WOODS - DAY 41 *
Garland and Ben ride out of the woods onto a road -- *

BEN
Union soldiers in the heart of
Virginia? That's not possible.

GARLAND
Yet you saw 'em, just like me. *

And they go galloping off, racing for home. *

42 EXT. RIDGE TOP OVERLOOKING LYNCHBURG - DAY 42
And now we are looking at the HAZY IMAGE of LYNCHBURG
through the LENS OF A TELESCOPE.

KANE (O.S.)
Lynchburg. Pleasant enough looking
piss hole of a town...

The telescope is being held by Palmer Kane. He stands with
Robert Sumner --

KANE
Soon to become famous. Or
infamous, depending on how history
writes it.

ROBERT
How do we proceed, sir?

KANE
We'll camp here for the night.
Wait for the pickets to report.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
I'll tell the men.

But before he can go --

KANE
Your theory. It's flawed.

ROBERT
My theory.

KANE
Why you volunteered this idea, to
come to your wife's town...

Robert turns to listen --

KANE
Your hope is that by doing this,
the war will be over in an instant -
- our country happily reunited.

He looks over at Robert --

KANE
Am I right?

Robert is being careful to be respectful --

ROBERT
-- Yes, sir, my hope is that the
war will be quick.

KANE
Delusions destroy us, Mr. Sumner.
Remember that. The differences
between our two sides are not going
to be settled by one raid. We are
two nations stuck together within
one set of borders. And we do not
fit.

ROBERT
Then why did you agree to ride down
here?

KANE
If I am responsible for the first
bold and imaginative victory of the
war? Lincoln and his cronies will
have no choice but to give me an
army. One of the main armies.

(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

KANE (CONT'D)

And then I will conduct this war in
the only way possible to win it.

ROBERT

Which is what, sir?

KANE

To beat the mutiny out of every
man, woman and child in the South.

Robert registers the magnitude of his grandiosity --

KANE

We were established as one nation
under God. He is at our back.
This is our nation. And we will
restore her.

CLOSE ON a BRACE OF PISTOLS. They are spread out on a table
and Ralston is cleaning them. He's talking to Kate and
Estella. *

RALSTON *

Communication with soldiers is
never reliable, so you cannot count
on John or Garland... Running
Point of Honor will be up to my
daughters. *

Lorelei steps out from inside the house, and Ralston includes
her with his eyes -- *

RALSTON *

Thank God my daughters are who they
are. *

LORELEI *

Daddy, what are you talking about? *

Ralston expertly snaps apart a PISTOL and applies a cleaning
cloth to the various parts.

LORELEI *

You're not planning on joining -- *

RALSTON

-- I won't be joining anything.
I'll be forming my own regiment.

LORELEI

Daddy -- you can't -- be sensible.

He snaps the pistol back together --

RALSTON

Where's my Derringer cap and ball?

LORELEI

Did you hear what I said?!

*

RALSTON

Someone's taken my Derringer.

Kate pulls the tiny but deadly DERRINGER from a pocket folded into the back of her dress.

KATE

I'm sorry, Daddy, I needed it.

She hands it back to Ralston. His eyes catch hers.

RALSTON

That's my girl.

Ralston looks at his daughters; he is a bold and brash man, and he loves his daughters. He knows what war might mean.

RALSTON

I'll need my rifles, too. And I'm glad I taught you all how to use them.

And with that Ralston walks into the house. The sisters are left alone out on the porch.

LORELEI

Why do we have to be so eager to fight? Is that all we know how to do?!

ESTELLA

No, but it's what we do best.

LORELEI

This is all politics! We don't know if these men mean us harm!

(CONTINUED)

KATE

If Yankee armies come to Virginia,
do you imagine they mean us no
harm?!

LORELEI

Robert could never...

KATE

Never what? Pull a trigger? Lead
a charge? Lorelei... your heart is
torn. I understand. Say whatever
you want to me. But don't ever let
our father think you could chose
anything but this family!

John comes up onto the porch from around the side of the
house. Lorelei hopes she might find another ally in John.

LORELEI

Did you know Daddy's planning to
form his own regiment? *

JOHN

If war comes you didn't expect him
to sit at home, did you?

LORELEI

-- Yes. Yes, I did.

Kate pointing to something --

KATE

-- Is that Garland?

In a THUNDER OF HOOVES Garland comes RACING UP to the main
plantation house on his lathered, exhausted horse. Garland
spots Virgil, Elijah and several other slaves watching them
from the edge of the main house -- *

GARLAND

(excited)

Virgil! Elijah! Saddle up some
fresh horses! Hurry! *

(to his sisters and John) *

There are Yankees up on McCauseland
Ridge! *

After a moment's hesitation the Slaves keep on doing what
they have always done -- *

VIRGIL

Yessir, Mr. Garland.

(CONTINUED)

Virgil and Elijah and two other slaves hurry off to get the fresh horses. Now Ralston followed by Estella reappears on the porch holding a couple of RIFLES, and pays close attention.

KATE
Yankees? On the ridge? How is that possible?

ESTELLA
Are you still drunk?

GARLAND
I saw what I saw.

JOHN
What exactly did you see?

GARLAND
Four soldiers. Probably pickets. On horseback. Up in the woods just north of the Blackwater Creek bridge.

John, Ralston and the sisters all listen, dumbfounded. Garland marches up onto the porch --

GARLAND
I don't give a damn if y'all don't believe me. I'll fight 'em alone if I have to!

Garland grabs two PISTOLS from Ralston's collection on the table. Ralston hands him a RIFLE. *

RALSTON
You take the Chesterfield, I'll take the twin bore! *

A clear sign he believes his son and will fight with him. *

JOHN
If we're going out there, we should take more ammunition. *

The three men all walk inside. *

LORELEI
Have we ALL gone crazy here?! *

ESTELLA
Lorelei, did you grow up in some other family? *

Lorelei goes inside after the men, Estella following. Kate is left alone on the porch. *

And now some other RIDERS THUNDER UP THE DRIVEWAY -- Ben Howland, Byrne Murphy, and ANDREW HART all on HORSEBACK. *

Kate hurries down to where Byrne is expertly reining in his stallion and swinging down from the saddle. The other two riders know they have a relationship and hang back -- *

KATE
Byrne? How did you -- ?

BYRNE
-- Ben Howland ran into us along the road. Told us what was going on. I thought I should lend a hand.

KATE
You think it's true? That there could be Yankees out there?

BYRNE
(shrugs)
It's a nice day for a ride. And it would be good thing if there was a cooler head along.

Kate's eyes shine --

KATE
Thank you for that.

BYRNE
Kate, we never had a moment for our private walk.

KATE
I... I'm not sure you're going to want to ask me anymore.

He looks surprised -- has Kate anticipated the reason?

BYRNE
Did somebody --

KATE
-- John has freed our slaves, and I understand if that will make it impossible for us to be married.

BYRNE

Who said --

KATE

-- My answer would've been yes.
But I realize that your family has
300 slaves, so that makes it
impossible. But know this, Byrne --
you have won my heart.

Byrne is overwhelmed, trying to process all of this --

BYRNE

-- Yes... Yes...? Nothing in
heaven or hell could stop me. I
will marry you, Kate.

Now it's Kate's turn to be surprised.

KATE

You will?

He's overwhelmed with love and pulls her close. Not caring
that the firm tradition of the man proposing has been upended
by her. They KISS. A moment of pure happiness that lingers
until --

It is busted up by Ralston Rhodes BANGING OUT through the
DOOR onto the porch wearing his well-worn Mexican War BATTLE
COAT and SABER. He picks some guns off the table. Garland
moves out, too, checking his rifle. Followed by John. *

He clocks the kiss but doesn't say anything about it --

RALSTON

(calling out)

Virgil! I'm ridin' Highfly!

KATE

Daddy, you don't need to go --

I don't think this is a good
idea --

RALSTON

-- Outta my way, Katie. *

(mild) *

-- Well, I don't care what
you think. * *

Ralston is on the move, and Kate is FORCED TO YIELD. Now *
Lorelei emerges from the inside, followed by Estella.

LORELEI

Daddy, c'mon -- *

Estella jumps in with her opinion.

(CONTINUED)

ESTELLA

If he wants to go, he should!

LORELEI

You stay out of it!

ESTELLA (CONT'D)

-- Why?! I don't have a
say?!

Lorelei doesn't yield --

LORELEI

Suddenly, for the first time ever,
you've decided to involve yourself
in family matters? --

*

ESTELLA

-- First time ever?!

*

*

As their AD-LIBBED ARGUMENT CONTINUES, RAMPING UP --

JOHN

Wait.

*

They all stop.

*

JOHN

No more arguing. We're all going.

*

*

Ralston beams. So does Garland. Elijah yells to a young boy
slave, TOBY, 12 --

ELIJAH

Toby! Bring around Mr. John's
horse!

Toby runs off as Virgil holds Ralston's horse as he mounts
up. Byrne brushes by Kate before he mounts up --

BYRNE

(quietly)

Kate, you have made me the happiest
man in Virginia.

KATE

God speed you. You want to marry
into this crazy family?

*

*

Their eyes meet, shining with love --

BYRNE

Yes, ma'am...

Toby runs around the house leading John's horse.

(CONTINUED)

John mounts up. The young men gather on their horses.
Ralston swings his horse around to lead them out --

RALSTON
Heeyaaaaahhhh!

Kate, Lorelei and Estella stand there on the majestic front porch and watch them RIDE AWAY.

43A EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - DAY 43A *

Phoebe hangs LAUNDRY behind the slave cabins where some other slaves work. *

Cutler, the overseer, pulls up with two other White Men in a wagon. Shackled by the ankle in the wagon is PALIDORE, 26, a wiry, smart slave. The white men climb down. *

Cutler calls out to Palidore, the slave in the wagon -- *

CUTLER
Get down outta there, boy. *

He gets out. He watches intently but also reveals nothing -- *

CUTLER
This here's Palidore. He's gonna be our new shoemaker. *

Cutler points to HANY, 23, one of the female slaves watching. *

CUTLER
Hany, find him a place to sleep in one'a the cabins. *

Everybody is a little confused at Cutler willfully ignoring John's speech and liberation, but no one dares confront him -- *

HANY
Yessir. *

Now Cutler turns to Phoebe -- *

CUTLER
Phoebe! You got five minutes to get your things. These men are takin' you to your new home. *

Phoebe BREAKS INTO TEARS. *

PHOEBE *
No, I ain't goin'! You can't! We *
was freed! You heard Mr. John say *
it! You was there! I ain't goin'! *

CUTLER *
Like hell you ain't! This deal was *
made last week. Signed and *
delivered! I got a contract! *

PHOEBE *
Somebody help me! Somebody get *
Miss Kate! *

Cutler walks over and HITS HER. TWICE. She falls to the *
ground, HURT. Cutler pulls his gun -- *

CUTLER *
Who wants to help you?! Who wants *
to help poor Phoebe?! C'mon! *
Lemme see! *

Nobody moves a muscle. The two white men grab her. She *
struggles -- *

CUTLER *
Shackle her to the buckboard! *

They haul her -- struggling -- toward the wagon. The men HIT *
HER and KICK HER to make her comply. Other slaves are *
nearby. Cutler's fingertips dance on the trigger of his GUN. *
He WANTS to make an example out of somebody. But out of self *
preservation, no one intervenes. *

43B EXT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - FRONT PORCH - DAY 43B *

The sisters have gone back inside. Abby is cleaning the *
porch, moving the table where the guns stood. Elijah is *
gardening in front. Abby suddenly hears CRYING. Looks up TO *
SEE -- *

THE BUCKBOARD driven by Cutler, flanked by the two white men -- *
all with guns ready -- driving toward the front gates. Phoebe *
is shackled in the back and WAILING. *

Abby drops her broom, runs from the porch. Ready to sprint *
after the wagon when Elijah GRABS HER HARD -- *

ELIJAH *
Don't. *

He hold her fast as she BURSTS INTO TEARS. *

(CONTINUED)

ABBY
She's my sister!

ELIJAH
Think. Think.
(portentously)
He wants you to do this. We attack
Cutler -- the town will slaughter
all of us! Any excuse.
(beat)
We're dangerous now.

OFF ABBY, stricken with grief, feeling hollow and powerless,
but she knows he's right. There is nothing she can do.
Elijah offers only one cryptic but powerful word of hope --

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Wait... Wait.

44 EXT. KANE'S RIDGE CAMP - DAY 44

Kane and Robert stand in front of the four picket soldiers
that Garland encountered in the woods. Kane is FURIOUS --

KANE
These riders, they saw you in your
Union vestments? *

WINTHROP
I'm not entirely sure, sir. *

KANE
What do you mean? Either they did
or they didn't. *

Winthrop coughs up the truth -- it's painful -- *

WINTHROP
They -- when they cam riding by --
they were hanging from the side of
their horses. *

Kane processes this, INCREDULOUS. Winthrop is trying to spin
it in some sort of positive manner -- *

WINTHROP (CONT'D)
But since we couldn't see them, I
don't see how they could've seen
us, so -- *

Kane CUFFS HIM ACROSS THE FACE, dropping him to a knee. *

Robert watches this, learning more about Kane by the day. *

(CONTINUED)

KANE

(turns to Robert)
Remember what I said about
delusions?
(laying it out)
You were derelict. They didn't see
you?! Why do you think they did
what they did?
(annoyed)
You were spotted, you lost them,
and now they'll be riding for help.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Kane is instantly activated.

KANE (CONT'D)

This entire operation is predicated
on stealth.
(we need to move)
Have the men break camp. Double
time! We're not waiting 'til
morning. We're going to take out
the tracks now.
(turning to Robert)
Let's go, Mr. Sumner!

*
*
*
*
*
*

ROBERT

Right away, Colonel.

*
*

The men SCRAMBLE to break camp.

45 EXT. WOODS NORTH OF LYNCHBURG - DAY 45

In the DAPPLED LIGHT of a forest, we FIND John crouching over
torn earth and fresh horse hooves by a SHATTERED TREE STUMP.

JOHN

Four sets of fresh tracks...

DROPPING WIDER we see the FIVE OTHER SOUTHERN RIDERS --
Garland, Ralston, Byrne, Ben and ANDREW. They wait on
horseback.

GARLAND

I told you.

Ralston looks at his son, IMPRESSED.

RALSTON

Right as my leg, son.

Garland practically shines with appreciation. Realizing
there are riders in their area, John grows more cautious --

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Let's not all get bunched up.

(points)

Garland, you, Daddy and Ben --
flank out to our left.

*

(CONTINUED)

GARLAND
(lightly)
Yes, SIR! Never mind that this is
my scouting party, Mr. West Point.

JOHN
Scouting is the right word. We
don't engage. If you make any
contact at all, ride back to this
meeting point. We rally here
before we engage. *

GARLAND
Whatever you say, Lieutenant.

RALSTON
Good God, let's quit talking and
track these bastards. *

They divide in two groups: Garland, Ralston and Ben in one;
John, Byrne and Andrew in the other. Ralston makes a couple
of CLICKING NOISES to start Highfly walking forward. *

46 EXT. DEEPER IN THE WOODS - DAY 46

IN A SERIES OF SHOTS we're with Ralston, Garland and Ben.
It's TENSE NOW as they pick their way through a THICKET OF
TREES. Their hands stay close to their guns. They weave
their way through the foliage and suddenly spot -- *

THREE UNION SOLDIERS *

The forward pickets. And it's not WHAT ANYBODY IS EXPECTING --
AN ACTUAL, IMMEDIATE ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENEMY! *

And our guys are just as surprised. They all stare in
stunned amazement for a minute as time expands --

Then two of the Union soldiers RAISE THEIR GUNS. One FIRES --
BLAM! -- but MISSES WILDLY. But before the Union soldiers
can fire again, **BLAM! BLAM!** TWO QUICK SHOTS from Garland
and Ralston drop the soldiers to the ground. *

RALSTON
Sonsofbitches! *

The third soldier takes off, running through the woods --

UNION SOLDIER
Rebs! Rebs! Rebs!!

(CONTINUED)

POINT OF HONOR "Pilot" 3rd rev. 09/05/14 (Full Yellow) 53.
46 CONTINUED: 46

Now Garland, Ben and Ralston SEE LOTS OF OTHER UNION *
SOLDIERS, who hearing the SHOUTING emerge into the trees from
the larger clearing behind them. They raise their GUNS --

It's either fight or run. And this group is not going to
run. In fact, Ralston Rhodes is the last man in the South
who would ever run from a battle. He SCREAMS to the others -- *

RALSTON
Chaaarrrrge!!!

46A FROM ACROSS THE WOODS 46A

John hears what's going on, spins his horse -- *

JOHN
Oh, hell -- Daddy!

Too late. They are already THUNDERING FORWARD.

47 EXT. RIDGE TOP CAMP - DAY 47

Robert is overseeing his men as they BREAK CAMP -- loading *
their flop-and-drop TENTS into PACKS and onto HORSEBACK. *
That's when they HEAR the SCREAMING and the CRACKLE OF
GUNSHOTS --

They don't quite know how to react until Robert tells them -- *

ROBERT *
(striding toward the *
gunfire) *
Get your guns! Move! Move! Drop *
your packs! Rifles at the ready! *

OFF ROBERT. Realizing battle is coming. *

48 EXT. POINT OF HONOR MANSION - DAY 48

The QUIET COMPOSED IMAGE of the three sisters sit on the
porch at Point of Honor. No one is saying anything as they
all sit, with nothing to do but wait there helplessly.

Now the women all hear CRACKLING NOISES ECHOING DOWN THE
VALLEY. Kate lifts her head. Lorelei looks over --

LORELEI
Thunder?

Kate's face shows her CONCERN. *

(CONTINUED)

KATE
No, not thunder.

The women sit there, HELPLESS to do ANYTHING. Meanwhile -- *

49-50 OMITTED 49-50 *

51 EXT. WOODS - DAY 51 *

In the woods, two Pickets try to fire on Ralston, Garland and Ben who are on horseback as they CHARGE. Ralston shoots one. He uses his other gun to shoot the OTHER. The Picket staggers -- wounded -- but standing. *

Just then Garland rides by on his horse, pulling out his KNIFE and SLICING THE PICKET'S THROAT -- DROPPING HIM. *

52 EXT. UNION CAMP CLEARING - SAME 52

Some other Union SOLDIERS run into the clearing where the horses were being loaded onto HORSEBACK. They are PANICKED from the GUNSHOTS BEHIND THEM. *

Now Kane emerges from his bigger, more elaborate TENT. *

The sight of his men running away from battle and panicking enrages Kane. Robert watches this. *

KANE
Turn and fight! *

He pulls his gun and yells --

KANE
I'll shoot you myself if you do not face the enemy!

The Solder who yelled "Rebs" ignores his command -- runs right on by Kane -- still fleeing. Kane wheels and fires -- BLAM! DROPS his own soldier to the ground -- *

ROBERT
(shocked)
Sir? What -- *

KANE
-- No man under my command runs! *

POINT OF HONOR "Pilot" 3rd rev. 09/05/14 (Full Yellow) 55.
52 CONTINUED: 52

All the other soldiers see this. Holy shit. Kane just shot one of their own. But it's effective. All the other soldiers stop in their tracks. *

53 OMITTED 53 *

54 EXT. CLEARING - SAME 54 *

Now Kane and Robert try to organize their troops. They walk among them, rallying the soldiers and BARKING COMMANDS -- *

KANE ROBERT

Form a line! -- Spread out!

Form a single battle line! -- Make a defensive line!

-- Turn and prepare your rifles! Move to there! Go! Go! *

And it works -- they get their troops organized in an improvised BATTLE LINE. Suddenly, the scared soldiers have professional commanders telling them what to do. *

ROBERT

You will shoot only on my command! *

We see the SCARED FACES of the newly minted UNION SOLDIERS as they nervously wait for what they think is an entire invading Southern army. *

54A EXT. RALLY POINT - DAY 54A *

John, Byrne and Andrew peel up on horseback to where the SHATTERED TREE sits -- the rally point -- no one is there. *

They hear GUNFIRE. John wheels his horse and follows Ralston's path toward the gunfire, the others following him. *

JOHN

Follow me! *

55 EXT. CLEARING - SOUTHERNERS - SAME 55 *

Meanwhile, Ralston, Ben, and Garland ride up to the edge of the clearing. They look across -- see the Northern soldiers trying to form a line. *

56 EXT. CLEARING - NORTHERNERS - SAME 56

The moment the green soldiers see the Southerners, they START TO FIRE -- ignoring Robert's command.

56A EXT. CLEARING - SOUTHERNERS - SAME 56A

ON Garland, Ralston and Ben as bullets now WHIZ BY THEM. There are all sorts of Union Soldiers across from them. Garland remembers their agreement --

GARLAND

Back to the rally point!

He spins his horse and starts to ride back. Ben follows -- but is HIT IN THE BACK and blown off his horse. CUT TO --

56B OMITTED 56B *

56C EXT. CLEARING - SOUTHERNERS - SAME 56C

Ralston sees Ben -- DEAD. FIRE comes into his eyes. He stares over at the Northern soldiers fumbling to reload. An idea strikes him. CAMERA PUSHES IN CLOSE ON RALSTON AS RESOLVE CROSSES HIS FACE.

Ralston snaps the reins and RIDES TOWARD THE UNION LINE.

DEEPER IN THE WOODS

Garland realizes he's not being followed; he turns, sees Ben has fallen -- sees his father CHARGING TOWARD THE ENEMY --

GARLAND

Daddy!!

OFF RALSTON, GALLOPING HEADLONG toward the Yankees.
Ralston's plan is to get behind the enemy lines before they
can re-load.

57 EXT. THE CLEARING - SAME 57

A SERIES OF SHOTS --

Robert looks up -- sees a man charging on horseback across
the clearing. He RAISES HIS PISTOL.

SIGHTING OVER THE PISTOL -- Robert realizes the charging
rider is Ralston. He's STUNNED. Can't believe it.

RALSTON rides hard. Now sees Robert pointing the pistol at
him. Both men in shock at the sight of seeing each other.

KANE sees him charging. He moves goes to the fallen body of *
the Soldier who yelled Rebs, TURNING HIS BACK on the charging *
Ralston. Kane takes the dean man's carbine and uses the kit *
from the man's belt to expertly re-load the gun. *

Meanwhile, ROBERT is pointing his pistol but not firing -- *

RALSTON gets closer...

ROBERT cannot fire. He turns to his men --

ROBERT
Wait! Don't shoot! Take him
prisoner!

That's when Kane finishes reloading. He spins around in one *
motion with the re-loaded gun -- sites on Ralston -- and *
FIRES A SHOT! *

Ralston Rhodes takes the bullet in the upper chest, topples
from his saddle and tumbles to the ground.

Kane stares over at Robert, who had a shot -- *

KANE *
Why did you not fire?! *

Robert stares over at Kane --

ROBERT
That man is my wife's father!

Kane takes this in, disregardful. Instead, he looks around --

(CONTINUED)

KANE

It's too late for us. *

(surveying his remaining
troops) *

We're now 14 men in enemy
territory. We cannot be trapped. *

Lieutenant Sumner, get the men on
their horses! *

Robert stares over at Ralston. IN UTTER SHOCK. Looks back
at Kane, who sees him standing there, FROZEN --

(CONTINUED)

KANE
On their horses! NOW!

Robert doesn't have a choice but to obey his orders --

ROBERT
(to his men)
Mount up! All of you -- mount up!

The soldiers hustle from the battle line to their horses.

57A EXT. CLEARING - SOUTHERNERS - SAME

57A *

Garland thunders back up to the tree line to see the Union
Soldiers mounting up -- and his father lying SHOT in the
clearing --

GARLAND
Daddy!!

Unconcerned for his safety, he thunders up to him on
horseback, quickly dismounts --

GARLAND
Daddy...?!

Ralston is still alive, but has a horrible HOLE TORN IN HIS
CHEST ABOVE HIS HEART. Ralston looks up at Garland --

RALSTON
Robert.

Garland looks at him in disbelief.

GARLAND
(confused)
Robert?!

Ralston coughs. Blood coming up.

GARLAND
Daddy? Hold on...

RALSTON
-- I need some water.

And now the life drains away from Ralston's eyes, and he
dies. Garland is UTTERLY STRICKEN.

He looks over at the now DEPARTING UNION SOLDIERS, spotting
ROBERT last among the departing line of Union soldiers.

(CONTINUED)

Garland can't fucking believe it -- *

GARLAND *
(yelling) *
Robert! ROBERT! What did you do?! *

Now John, Byrne and Andrew thunder up to the clearing. John *
looks out -- sees Garland kneeling over Ralston's body. *

JOHN *
What happened?! *

GARLAND *
Robert Sumner is leading them! *
They just killed Daddy! *

JOHN GLARES OVER -- SPOTS ROBERT AT THE TREE LINE. ROBERT *
LOOKS BACK FROM HIS HORSE. HE AND JOHN LOCK EYES FOR A DARK, *
HORRIBLE MOMENT. *

Then Robert turns away, spurring his horse on, disappearing *
into the woods. *

CLOSE ON JOHN. Cold fury and determination in his eyes. *

War has begun. *

CUT TO BLACK. *