

Scene 19

Setting: The dock by the river. There is a boat docked.

Cast: Charlotte, Lizzie, Bucky, Brecky, Chauncey Weems, Timothy Slagle, other people around the dock. Weems is flamboyantly dressed.

(People on stage including Chauncey Weems, who is seated, and Timothy Slagle.)

(Lights Up)

(Charlotte enters with family. She is holding the hand of her older boy.)

Chauncey Weems

You, wench; come hither this instant!

Lizzie

Mama, we gotta go now!

Charlotte

Hol' tigh' baby.

(To other boy)

Son, hol' sister's hand.

(Charlotte turns to Weems,)

You talkin' to me?

Chauncey Weems

(He beckons to her)

(Pointing with his cane)

Yes, you with that garish yellow waistband. Over here, and bring the girl with you. I am in the process of establishing my homestead on a plot of land I have acquired north of here, and I need you to tote these bags of seed grain to that cart.

My intent is to raise a bevy of first-rate produce and this seed will be my seminal investment. After much conjecture, I have severed ties with the set of unruly

blokes on the Isle, who I once considered my associates, and hereby declare my intention to become part and parcel of the great western migration of the grand diaspora. Here, here, step lively now.

Charlotte

(Confused)

Not so sure 'bout what you be sayin' mister me; me 'n these chil'ren jus' movin'through.

Chauncey Weems

Rubbish. Tell me from whence you hail, for I need you in my service. And not to worry, I shall settle the price of your hire in due time, with he who claims you as his possession.

Charlotte

Beggin' yo' pardon, sir. Gen'rly I be happy to len' you a han'; but me 'n my youngin's is due on that boat. An' right now, we ain't got time to spare.

Chauncey Weems

You impudent scamp! How dare you refuse the bidding of one Reginald Bainbridge of Effingham.

(He stands)

Come now, none of your sass. Move quickly. My lad Elson here, will handle your brood while you work. We've been on this dock since morning. Came in on the vessel Aspen; up from St. Louis and now returning to the same. I shall be in dire need of a maidservant to assist in setting up housekeeping. Quite certain these seeds I've purchased will serve to start a successful agrarian enterprise.

I am told this craft will transport me and my possessions within a stone's throw of Burr Oak, our destination.

(He smokes his pipe)

I'll take the whole bloomin' troupe of you. Come now, don't dawdle.

(Charlotte begins loading the sacks on a cart and Lizzie helps.)

Lizzie

Mama, what we gon' do?

(Lizzie looks at Weems. She sees a purple lanyard with a locket ringed with pearls around his neck.)

Mama, look! Look at his ches'; ain't that them pearls, like the lady said?

(Weems is nonchalantly fingering the lanyard.)

Charlotte

(Steps closer.)

Chile, I believe so. An wha's more....

(Walks toward Weems. Recognizes the two men and turns to Lizzie)

Chile, tha's mista Chauncey, from the theater. An' he mista Slagle.

(Turns toward Lizzie.)

Do as he say, chile. We gon' be jus' fine.

(Pushes cart toward the boat.)

(Lights down)

Scene 20

Setting: Another dock.

Cast: Charlotte, Lizzie, Bucky, Brecky, Chauncey Weems, and Trevor Blair

(Charlotte and family on stage along with Chauncey Weems)

(Lights up)

Chauncey Weems

Hope I didn't frighten you too awful much dear; had to put on a convincing show for the locals.

Charlotte

I 'preciates yo' he'p Mista Chauncey, but you sho' 'nough had me goin'.

(They laugh and Chauncey indicates to Timothy Slagle where to put their things)