

## Scene 9

Setting: A gathering outside in a hollow. People sitting on logs, stumps, or the ground. Maybe a makeshift podium for the preacher.

Cast: Gathering scene. All African American cast members. Charlotte, Charles, Preacher Bird Moore, Brother Jonas, and Big Sis have speaking parts.

(People softly singing some gospel song)

(Lights up on Charlotte center stage)

Charlotte

George, you ain't so little no mo'. Doin' good to keep up wi' you. Couple o' years since Squire gon' but nuthin' much done change. In them fields e'ery day workin' like a mule.

'cept the Lawd's day, when we git together an' listen to Bird Moore preach; talkin' 'bout that good place, an' them good times. Jus' good bein' wit' my people. 'Bout all I got right now.

(Lights up full.)

(Song full volume)

(Charlotte sits down)

(Bird Moore speaks after the end of the song.)

Preacher Moore

Brother, Sisters, we knowed when they brung us here this ain't our home. No man treated this way in his own house.

Brother Jonas

Yessah preacher.

Preacher Moore

But this ain't our home, fo' real; 'cause we aimin' for a better lan', a hea'm'ly lan'.

Brother Jonas

Better lan'!

Preacher Moore

Lan' where God not 'shame to call me his chile'. An' these ol' rags we got on here. Ain't gon' need 'em when we get up yonder. No sir, gon' get me a robe.

Brother Jonas

Yessir, Preacher! A robe. What you gon' do wit' it, preacher?

Preacher Moore

(Could be spoken or sung)

Well bro' Jonus, (Ha ha) when ah get to hea'm; gonna put on mah robe; 'n gon' walk all over God's hea'm.

Brother Jonas

Yessir, walk on Preacher!

(Crowd shouts approval. As Preacher Moore struts around the stage, Big Sis jumps to her feet and sings.)

Big Sis

"Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus. Steal away, steal away home. I ain't got long to stay here.

My Lord calls me. He calls me by the thunder. The trumpet sounds within uh my soul. I ain't got long to stay here."

(Big Sis sits. Crowd again reacts. After it settles Charles stands.)

Charles

Preacher Moore, you done said right. Massa Collins, Massa Carter, Dick Harvey, John Botts, Henry Brill, Dave Pruett; all of 'em here on Parson Creek and on down the Grand River makin' they livin' off folks like you 'n me.

And what we got to show but a tired body, an' a back full 'o stripes. Our women 'bused, raisin' they chil'ren, when our own ain't got 'nough to eat.

Brother Jonas

Speak the truth, bro' Charles.

Charles

(Looking around to make sure there are no unwanted listeners before speaking in a lowered tone)

Y'all bes' be knowin', John Brown 'n his boys is movin'. Jus' las' week they take a group from 'round Plas'burgh up north to freedom.

Neffy, you an' Brock, Jace; we been workin' dese fields long as I can recall, but, it ain't gon' always be that way. Might not be t'day, but, mark my word', we gon see a better day.

Preacher Moore

Sho' hope you right, bro' Charles. Sho' hope you right.

(Lights down)