

RADICALS EPISODE 1  
A FEARFUL STORM  
By Nancy Ostertag & Vanessa Ruane

1 EXT./INT. WASHINGTON, CARRIAGE HOUSE, AUGUST 1856 - NIGHT 1

In the pouring rain, a young woman, ISABELLA WHEELER (Af-Am, 28) knocks repeatedly on the front door. It opens to reveal SARAH BROWN (Af-Am, 24) in a thin robe, her hair in a scarf.

SARAH

Yes?

ISABELLA

I'm sorry, I know it's late. I'm Isabella Wheeler from Zion Baptist. I've heard you're discrete. We need a midwife, now.

SARAH

Come in. I'll get dressed.

Isabella waits while Sarah gets dressed and leaves a note for her mother. She grabs her cloak and a bag.

2 EXT. WASHINGTON CANAL - NIGHT

2

Isabella leads Sarah along the dark canal to the HELP OF WASHINGTON, a two-mast schooner moored nearby.

Standing in the rain, waiting to greet them is REVEREND JOHN HAYDEN (Af-Am, 26)

JOHN

Thank you for coming Miss Brown. I'm Reverend Hayden. We're going north and we must sail before sunrise.

SARAH

I understand.

ISABELLA

I have to get back. Thank you, Miss Brown.

Isabella starts back down the path. John reaches out for Sarah's arm, guiding her as they cross a wide plank to board the ship.

3 EXT./INT. STOREROOM THE HELP OF WASHINGTON - MOMENTS LATER 3

In the dim light of a single shaded lantern, a YOUNG WOMAN (Af-Am, 20s) lies on a makeshift bed. Kneeling next to her, a terrified YOUNG MAN (Af-Am, 20s) looks up as Sarah and John enter. Sarah kneels down next to her.

SARAH

I'm Sarah. What's your name?

CONSTANCE

Constance. It's too soon. It ought to be a few weeks yet.

SARAH

How long since quickening?

CONSTANCE

Three, maybe four months.

SARAH

That's not too bad. Can I look?

Constance nods. Sarah reaches under her shift.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You're close. (to John) I need water, can we risk the stove?

John shakes his head.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Then from the rain barrels, not the canal. And clean linens.

John leaves to get the supplies. Sarah takes off her cloak.

4

INT. STOREROOM THE HELP OF WASHINGTON - MOMENTS LATER

4

John returns with two jugs of water and an armful of linens. Sarah stands near the lantern, adding crushed herbs to a bowl while Constance paces the small room, leaning on her husband.

SARAH

Put the linens down next to the bed.

John does as Sarah says. She pours water into the bowl of herbs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Each of you take an arm.

The two men carry Constance to the bed. Sarah soaks a strip of linen in the herb-infused water twisting it into a rope. She hands it to Constance.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You are ready to push, but you can't cry out. Bite down on this.

Constance puts the rope in her mouth. She looks into Sarah's eyes, scared.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
You can do this. With your next breath, bear down.

Constance takes a deep breath, biting down as she exhales.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Good. Again.

Constance bears down again, and again; tears streaming down her face.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Almost there.

Constance spits out the rope, crying out. Sarah reaches down to catch the baby.

Somewhere outside a dog starts barking. John watches Sarah cut the cord, blow into the baby's mouth, wrap him in linens, and hand him to Constance.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Your son. On your breast, quick.

More dogs barking. John locks eyes with Sarah.

JOHN  
We have to go.

Sarah gives instructions as she packs up.

SARAH  
The afterbirth will come soon. Make sure it's all out. Use strips of the linen soaked in herbs to help with the bleeding. Change them often over the next week. Rest when you can.

CONSTANCE  
Thank you.

Sarah takes her hand briefly, before following John out to the deck.

JOHN  
Careful, it's slippery.

SARAH  
Thank you.

Their hands touch briefly and their eyes lock. Sarah steps across and onto shore. John pulls the plank back. He smiles at Sarah from the ship.

JOHN  
May I call on you when I get back?

Sarah grins at him and nods. John winks at her as the ship disappears into the mist.

6 INT. STEAM TRAIN PASSENGER CAR - NIGHT

6

Lit by a single CANDLE, A heavy silence hangs over SURVIVORS of the Last Island Hurricane.

HANDS clutch a battered, wooden 1855 Peck & Co. CAMERA. Holding tightly to it is ELIZABETH RANDOLPH SHAW, (white, 19) her right arm wrapped in a makeshift, blood-stained bandage; her bare feet and legs covered in cuts and bruises.

7 EXT. NEW ORLEANS TRAIN DEPOT - CONTINUOUS

7

Anxious FAMILY MEMBERS wait next to eager REPORTERS as the survivors disembark. Carrying two large satchels, clinging to her broken camera, Lizzie walks past the crowd to a LAWYER holding a sign that reads, "Shaw."

LIZZIE  
I'm Elizabeth Shaw.

The lawyer looks down a long LIST of Shaw names to find hers.

LAWYER  
Anyone else?

Lizzie shakes her head no.

LAWYER (CONT'D)  
I'm so sorry.

He gestures, pointing her towards a waiting HACK.

**END TEASER**

ACT ONE

8 INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - MORNING

8

Sarah enters to find her mother, MEG BROWN (Af-Am, 48) doing her morning stretches in the front parlor.

MEG

Is everything set up? It won't be long. I heard the train.

SARAH

I think so, at least as much as possible before we know her condition.

MEG

I made coffee

SARAH

Thanks, I'll go wash up.

Meg goes back to stretching.

9 EXT. RANDOLPH HOUSE 6TH AND MAINE - LATER

9

The Randolph House and Infirmary stands out amongst the row houses on Maine Avenue. The windows are draped with black crepe, indicating a home in mourning.

Lizzie's grandfather, DR. ROBERT RANDOLPH (white, 60s) waits with Meg and Sarah on the front steps, all of them wearing black mourning bands, and holding umbrellas. The Hack pulls up and Dr. Randolph opens the carriage door. He shields Lizzie with his umbrella as she steps out, clutching her camera. He puts a hand on her shoulder.

DR. RANDOLPH

Welcome, Lizzie. I'm so glad you're here. I'm sure it's what your mother would have wanted. You'll want to bathe, and rest. Whatever you need, I'll take care of you. We're all the family we have left, now.

LIZZIE

Thank you.

He gestures for Lizzie to follows Meg and Sarah up the steps, and into the house.

10

INT. RANDOLPH HOUSE GUEST ROOM - LATER

10

Lizzie reclines in a copper bathtub. Her right arm has a nasty, oozing cut and her hair hangs down in a matted knot.

Sarah KNOCKS, and enters. She sees Lizzie quickly turn away, wiping tears from her eyes.

SARAH

I'm so sorry. I can come back.

LIZZIE

No, It's alright. It comes in waves.

SARAH

I've got a poultice for your arm.

LIZZIE

Whatever you put in this water, thank you. Bathing without all the little cuts burning is amazing.

Lizzie stands, shimmies out of her bathing dress, and puts on a robe, wincing as the sleeve brushes her arm. She sits down at the vanity. Sarah preps the poultice and bandage.

SARAH

It is mostly chamomile, and lemon balm, but there is rosemary as well, to address the inflammation.

She wraps the bandage around Lizzie's wound while Lizzie contemplates her matted hair in the mirror.

LIZZIE

Between the storm, and that mourning veil, my hair is a hopeless mess. I'm never going to be able to comb through it.

SARAH

I have a cream downstairs in the pharmacy that will soften it.

LIZZIE

That's alright, I've got it.

Lizzie grabs a large pair of scissors and hacks her hair off at the nape of her neck. They are both speechless at first, until Sarah breaks the tension.

SARAH

Alright then. Problem solved.

Lizzie grins at her, and they both start laughing.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
I'll just take these.

Sarah gently takes the scissors.

11 INT. RANDOLPH HOUSE GUEST ROOM - DAYS LATER

11

Dr. Randolph knocks and enters.

DR. RANDOLPH  
What is that smell?

He looks around, frowning. The room is littered with projects.

DR. RANDOLPH (CONT'D)  
It's wafting all down the hall.

Lizzie stands at a table, her short hair tucked behind her ears. In front of her are several glass vials filled with clear liquid.

LIZZIE  
I'm sorry. I know. I wanted to see if I could make collodion with what's here.

Sarah enters next, carrying a steaming kettle. Dr. Randolph opens the window.

DR. RANDOLPH  
Let's get some fresh air in here.  
Come, sit. Let me look at your arm.

Lizzie sits in a chair near the hearth. Dr. Randolph unwraps her bandage while Sarah preps an atomizer.

DR. RANDOLPH (CONT'D)  
This cut is healing well.

LIZZIE  
Good. I need to go get proper supplies. I can't print with what I have.

DR. RANDOLPH  
There's plenty of time for all of that when you've recovered. For now, you need rest.

He nods to Sarah, and pats Lizzie on the head.

DR. RANDOLPH (CONT'D)  
I'll be out on rounds. I'll see you  
later this evening.

He leaves, and Sarah drapes a cloth over Lizzie's shoulders.

SARAH  
Ready?

LIZZIE  
He won't listen to me. I need  
supplies. I saved dozens of plates,  
but I don't know if they were  
damaged in the evacuation. I have  
to make prints.

SARAH  
What are you missing?

LIZZIE  
I need nitrate of silver, and  
alcohol.

SARAH  
We've got alcohol, no nitrate of  
silver, unless we make it.

Sarah hands Lizzie the mouthpiece.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
We can go down to the pharmacy and  
see what we have after this. Deep  
breath in.

Lizzie nods, covering her mouth and nose to inhale the steam.

12 INT. RANDOLPH FAMILY INFIRMARY - MOMENTS LATER 12

Sarah and Lizzie look through the shelves in the pharmacy.

LIZZIE  
You have just about everything.  
Here's nitric acid.

SARAH  
We make all our own compounds.  
Tinctures, teas, creams. My mother  
has recipes that go back  
generations.

LIZZIE  
Can we work in here?

SARAH  
I'm not sure that's the best idea.

There's a quick knock and Meg enters holding a note.

MEG  
It's from Justice Taney's daughter.  
He can't get a proper breath. Dr.  
Randolph is still out. I need you  
to take an atomizer over there.

Sarah turns to Lizzie.

SARAH  
Sorry, I have to go.

Lizzie nods, and follows them into the front room. A MESSENGER is standing in the reception area.

MEG  
Did you come by hack?

The messenger nods. Meg hands him several coins.

MEG (CONT'D)  
Please take my nurse, Miss Brown  
back to Justice Taney's apartment.

Sarah packs up the equipment and rushes out. Lizzie smiles awkwardly at Meg.

MEG (CONT'D)  
Can I get you something, Miss Shaw?

Lizzie looks back at the pharmacy before shaking her head.

LIZZIE  
No. Thank you, Mrs. Brown.

Lizzie heads back up to the guest room.

13 INT. JUSTICE TANEY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER 13

A TEENAGE GIRL opens the back door and leads Sarah through the apartment to a back parlor.

CHIEF JUSTICE ROGER TANEY (white, 79) is slumped in a chair next to the fire trying to breathe; his overwrought daughter ELLEN TANEY (white, 30) by his side. Sarah turns to the girl.

SARAH  
Bring me a full kettle.

She turns back to the Chief Justice.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Mr. Chief Justice, It's Miss Brown  
from Dr. Randolph's office.

Sarah unpacks the atomizer, filling the chamber with herbs from a paper pouch. The girl returns with a steaming kettle. Sarah fills the atomizer. Ellen stands back watching.

Sarah holds the tube and mask up to Justice Taney's face. He starts violently wheezing.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Breathe in. It's alright.

Sarah uses one hand to hold the mask over Taney's mouth and nose. With her other hand she grips the old man's thin arm, and finds his eyes, frustrated and scared. She calmly holds his gaze.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Breathe in slow, good. Now out,  
slowly, that's it.

Justice Taney stops wheezing as the medicine starts to work. Sarah puts her hand on his chest. His breathing steadies.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Can you hold the mask?

Justice Taney nods weakly, still looking into Sarah's eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Good. There you go. Deep breaths.

Sarah refills the water and adds more herbs.

14

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVE. WHITEHURST GALLERY - DAY

14

Pennsylvania Avenue stretches from the Capitol to the President's mansion, lined with hotels, bookshops, and portrait studios.

Lizzie, wearing her matte black mourning dress, her short hair hidden by a black veil, strides up the crowded street and stops at Shillington's bookstore.

She takes the stairs to the second floor entrance of Whitehurst's, the largest photo studio in town.

15

INT. WHITEHURST'S GALLERY - MOMENTS LATER

15

Lizzie wanders the empty gallery, staring up at the walls filled from floor to ceiling with framed photographs. She pulls out a list of the supplies she needs.

Doors at the end of the hall open. JACK STEPHENSON (White, 30's), and a stunning, dark-haired woman in a crimson dress, TERESA BAGIOLI SICKLES (white, 21) enter. Teresa holds a large framed portrait.

TERESA

It's absolutely perfect. My husband will love it. You've outdone yourself.

They notice Lizzie standing there.

JACK

Can I help you? Miss...

LIZZIE

Shaw. Elizabeth Shaw.

TERESA

The Last Island Heiress?

LIZZIE

Excuse me?

TERESA

Forgive me. Where are my manners? I'm Mrs. Sickles, this is Mr. Jack Stephenson, the manager here. I've been following your story. It's all over the papers. What you've been through. I'm so sorry.

LIZZIE

Thank you.

JACK

How can I help you, Miss Shaw?

TERESA

It's about your camera, isn't it? She carried it all the way here. She survived the most fearful storm, it destroyed the whole of Last Island, and she was the only one from her family to make it out.

Lizzie nods, slightly embarrassed.

LIZZIE

I'm afraid she's right. I saved dozens of plates, but I don't have any chemistry or proper trays to make prints. I'm worried exposure to salt water from the storm may have damaged them.

Teresa hands Lizzie a card.

TERESA

I'll let you two talk shop. But please, Miss Shaw, join me tomorrow night at the theater. My husband and I are sharing a box at the National with Mr. Buchanan and his niece. Come regale us with your tale. The press will be there obviously. It's a perfect first sighting. You can announce to society that you're here, ready for the season. Now, who should escort you?

LIZZIE

I suppose my grandfather

TERESA

No. No one wants a Republican at the theater. Mr. Stephenson, you're a bachelor, are you not?

JACK

I am.

TERESA

There it is. You'll escort Miss Shaw. I'll send a proper invite and see you both tomorrow.

Teresa bows slightly to each of them and sweeps out.

JACK

That happened fast.

LIZZIE

Who is she?

JACK

Mrs. Daniel Sickles. If the election goes as expected, her husband will be one of the most powerful men in town.

LIZZIE

She doesn't think much of my grandfather.

Jack notices the list in Lizzie's hand.

JACK

No, but I'm happy to escort you. Mr. Buchanan and I are both members of the Bachelor's Club, though we've never met.

He gestures towards the doors.

JACK (CONT'D)

But you came for supplies. Let me show you what we have available. So, do you have pictures of the island?

Lizzie follows him down the hallway.

LIZZIE

If the plates are still good, yes. I have pictures of the hotel, the village, all of it.

JACK

There's demand for those. If you're willing, we'd sell your prints here for a small commission. And I'm certain Shillington's downstairs would want postcards while the story is still in the papers.

Jack shows Lizzie into a room lined with shelves and filled with various compounds. In the far corner there is a row of cameras. Lizzie looks around the room.

LIZZIE

How much do you think I could make on the prints?

JACK

I'm not sure. Why?

LIZZIE

I can't work at my Grandfather's house. I need a small place to rent, something upstairs with good light. But, I can't access funds from my father's estate without going through my grandfather, and I don't want to. Not right now.

(MORE)

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

I have enough saved from my travel  
money for the first couple months,  
but after that, print sales could  
come in very handy.

JACK

If you're looking for a studio,  
Shillington's has the Evening Star.  
They publish listings every day.  
But, you're better off talking to  
Mr. Purdy at the telegraph office.  
He's got a jump on the newest ones  
before they hit the paper.

LIZZIE

Thank you.

JACK

Sure. Let's get you printing. I  
have pre-mixed developer, fix, and  
sensitized paper for printing.

LIZZIE

I mix my own chemistry. I'll need  
silver nitrate, alcohol, and salt.  
Plus trays and tools.

Impressed, Jack starts pulling items off the shelves.

16

INT. NATIONAL HOTEL TELEGRAPH OFFICE - LATER

16

The front counter is empty when Lizzie enters. She sees a  
crowd of OPERATORS and MESSENGERS gathered in the back.

She looks around, and finds a bulletin board with ads on  
index cards. As she scans them, she hears the crowd in the  
back start counting down from ten, laughing and cheering.

Lizzie turns, and sees TEMPERANCE PURDY BUTLER (White, 21)  
and a YOUNG MAN stand up from their desks as all the  
operators cheer.

THOMAS PURDY (White, 40s) laughs and slaps the young man on  
the back.

MR. PURDY

Sorry, Plug, it's not even close.  
No one beats my Tempe.

Everyone heads back to work.

Tempe sees Lizzie at the counter. She walks over, smiling.

TEMPE

Sorry about that. The new plugs always think they'll be faster at morse code, and the old guys love it. Temperance Butler. How can I help you?

She reaches across for Lizzie's hand. Surprised, Lizzie shakes.

LIZZIE

Elizabeth Shaw. I'm looking for rooms to lease. I saw a place on your board.

TEMPE

Sure thing. (waving) Dad!

Mr. Purdy joins them at the counter.

MR. PURDY

What can I do for you?

LIZZIE

There's a rental on your board, three rooms above MacNeil's bakery.

MR. PURDY

Sure. MacNeil is a good guy. Take the card off the board, and have your husband call on him at the bakery.

He heads back. Tempe gestures towards Lizzie's outfit.

TEMPE

Sorry. He never notices anything.

LIZZIE

Not at all. It's been rather awkward having everyone I meet already know who I am.

Another CUSTOMER enters and starts writing down a message.

TEMPE

I bet. Just take the card anyway. If your grandfather allows it, the MacNeils may not mind.

Tempe turns to help the waiting customer. Lizzie takes the card and puts it in her pocket.

17

INT. JUSTICE TANEY'S APARTMENT - LATER

17

Sarah instructs Ellen on how to use the atomizer while Justice Taney sleeps by the fire.

SARAH

His breathing is regulated now, but you have to keep more logs on the fire through the night. The cold air can bring on the attacks. I've left you a tea to prepare for him before he retires. I'll report back to Dr. Randolph, and bring you more medicine tomorrow.

Ellen nods and escorts Sarah out the back door.

18

INT. RANDOLPH HOUSE GUEST ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

18

Lizzie unpacks the chemistry, tools, and paper from Whitehurst's. Her table is covered with trays and vials of liquid. A KNOCK, and Dr. Randolph enters. He frowns as he hands Lizzie a small envelope.

DR. RANDOLPH

This came for you from a Mrs. Sickles. I see you went out and got your supplies after all.

Lizzie opens it, smiling as she reads the card inside.

LIZZIE

We met at Whitehurst's. She invited me to the theater tomorrow.

DR. RANDOLPH

Mrs. Daniel Sickles?

LIZZIE

Yes. We'll be joining Mr. Buchanan and his niece Miss Lane.

DR. RANDOLPH

Well, Sickles is a Tammany Hall stooge, and Buchanan is, who he is. But, this is Washington, and one can't fault the ladies for any of that. I'll allow it. What time are we expected?

LIZZIE

Oh. Thank you. But, Mr. Stephenson is escorting me.

DR. RANDOLPH  
Who is Mr. Stephenson?

LIZZIE  
He manages Whitehurst's Gallery.  
Mrs. Sickles suggested it.

DR. RANDOLPH  
I see. Well, so long as you  
understand what is expected of you.  
You owe it to your parents to find  
a man worthy of your father's  
fortune. That is your north star.

Lizzie swallows a sarcastic retort, managing a smile instead.

LIZZIE  
Of course. Thank you.

DR. RANDOLPH  
Now, clean all this up, and open  
the window. It stinks in here.

19 INT. RANDOLPH FAMILY INFIRMARY - LATER

19

Meg is crushing dried herbs when Sarah comes back in.

MEG  
How'd it go?

SARAH  
He's alright for now. I'll need to  
go back tomorrow.

Sarah starts unpacking her equipment. Meg holds up a card.

MEG  
You had a visitor.

SARAH  
Who?

MEG  
The Reverend from Zion Baptist. He  
said he wanted to thank you for  
your help. He was quite charming.

She hands the card to Sarah, who blushes reading it.

20 EXT./INT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH - THE NEXT EVENING

20

John is waiting outside when Sarah arrives.

SARAH

Sorry I'm late. I was delayed at  
Justice Taney's.

JOHN

The Chief Justice is your patient?

SARAH

Officially, he's Dr. Randolph's  
patient, but yes, I've been  
treating him.

John is impressed. He leads Sarah around back.

21 INT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

21

John and Sarah walk through a dark corridor. They can hear  
FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS, (Af-Am 30) reciting one of her poems.

FRANCES WATKINS (O.S.)

Like a fawn from the arrow,  
startled and wild, A woman swept by  
us, bearing a child.

John touches Sarah's shoulder, they pause in the shadows.

FRANCES WATKINS (CONT'D)

She was nearing the river, in  
reaching the brink, she heeded no  
danger, she paused not to think,  
for she is a mother - her child is  
a slave - and she'll give him his  
freedom, or find him a grave!

Sarah closes her eyes, listening intently.

FRANCES WATKINS (CONT'D)

With her step on the ice, and her  
arm on her child, the danger was  
fearful, the pathway was wild, but,  
aided by heaven, she gained a free  
shore, where the friends of  
humanity open'd their door.  
Poverty, danger and death she can  
brave, for the child of her love is  
no longer a slave!

The audience explodes with applause. Sarah realizes she's  
been holding her breath. She exhales, tears streaming down  
her face. John guides her to where his mother, ALICE HAYDEN  
(Af-Am 50's) holds two open seats up front.

22

INT. NATIONAL THEATER - EVENING

22

Actor PETER SULLIVAN (white, 28), and actress FANNY MORANT (white, 26) perform in THE NAIAD QUEEN, accompanied by a CAST of ACTRESSES dressed as "amazonian" warriors.

Fanny dances suggestively around Sully, he reaches out to touch her but the warriors march between them. The orchestra music swells and Fanny and Sully come together in a passionate embrace. The curtain comes down to thunderous applause.

The house lights come up revealing Teresa, Jack, and Lizzie seated in a private box with Teresa's husband, DANIEL SICKLES (white, 36), JAMES BUCHANAN (white, 65) and his niece, MISS HARRIET LANE (white, 26) all clapping enthusiastically. Teresa whispers to Lizzie.

TERESA

Come with me, I want to get a glass of champagne before act three.  
Excuse us won't you?

Everyone stands. Lizzie and Teresa exit the box and walk into the private lounge behind. Teresa approaches an usher.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Would you mind relaying a message to Mr. Sullivan that his dear friend Mrs. Sickles would love to share a drink after the show.

The usher nods and leaves to deliver Teresa's message.

LIZZIE

How do you know Mr. Sullivan?

TERESA

I don't, but I bet he comes anyway.  
C'mon, I do want champagne.

Teresa leads Lizzie over to the bar in the lounge.

23

INT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

23

The reading is over and most of the crowd has gone. John, Sarah, Alice, Isabella, and John's friend HAROLD MOSLEY (Af-Am, 25) are gathered around Frances Watkins.

SARAH

Miss Watkins, thank you. Your words are etched into my very heart.

FRANCES WATKINS

I'm glad, that is how they get turned into action.

HAROLD

And we need more of that.

ALICE

I'm afraid it is getting late. Miss Watkins, I have supper for you, and a room to rest in until it's time to go. Miss Brown, it was a pleasure meeting you.

SARAH

Likewise. Thank you, Mrs. Hayden. This was an evening I won't forget.

JOHN

I'll walk you home.

ISABELLA

Is everything ready for later?

John nods.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

We'll leave around midnight.

John leads Sarah back through the church to the exit.

24

EXT. MARYLAND AVENUE - MOMENTS LATER

24

The avenue is lit by flickering gaslights as John and Sarah walk side by side.

SARAH

Miss Watkins was a revelation.

JOHN

A powerful speaker.

SARAH

How did you get her through Maryland?

JOHN

We sailed in from New York. Its harder than it used to be.

A WHITE COUPLE approaches. John offers his arm to Sarah as they step aside to let the couple pass.

SARAH

The young woman, from the other day, Constance, did she, is she?

JOHN

I don't know. I only take them to the next station.

SARAH

They weren't your first.

John shakes his head.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I want to help. Not just with medicine.

JOHN

You'll have to talk to Isabella, and my mother.

They reach the front of the Randolph house.

SARAH

We're around back in the carriage house.

JOHN

A peculiar arrangement.

SARAH

I suppose so.

Sarah explains as she leads him through the garden beds to the carriage house. Captivated, John walks slower trying to delay the end of their stroll.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Dr. Randolph was a lawyer when he met my parents in thirty two, they were all living in Baltimore. He brought his wife and daughter to them with the cholera. His wife succumbed, but they saved his daughter. My parents saved so many people that year, he was inspired to quit his practice and study herbal medicine with them, and then move here to open the infirmary. Later that year when my mother was pregnant with me, we lost my father and brother. So Dr. Randolph asked my mother to join him here.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

She's been running his pharmacy ever since. I grew up here working for them both. It's pretty in midsummer, with the garden in full bloom.

They reach Sarah's front door. John looks into her eyes.

JOHN

It's pretty right now.

Sarah giggles. John smiles sheepishly.

SARAH

I should go in.

But she doesn't move. John leans in closer. Sarah smiles up at him. He wraps her in his arms, and they kiss.

25

INT. NATIONAL THEATER PRIVATE LOUNGE - NIGHT

25

Teresa, Lizzie, and Miss Lane sip champagne while the men discuss politics. Lizzie listens, following their conversation. Teresa keeps her eye on the entrance.

JAMES BUCHANAN

It comes down to the preservation of this union. Every reasonable Whig must finally decide to vote with the Democrats, or risk a Fremont victory, and continued war in Kansas.

There is a stir in the crowd. Peter Sullivan enters with Fanny Morant, and an entourage of ACTRESSES. He finds Teresa smiling at him from across the room and strides over. Fanny and the actresses follow.

SULLY

My dear friend Mrs. Sickles, I presume.

He reaches out to take Teresa's hand and kiss it.

TERESA

Thank you for coming, Mr. Sullivan.

A WAITER circulates with a tray of champagne.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
May I introduce my husband, Mr.  
Daniel Sickles, Mr. Jack Stephenson  
of Whitehurst's, Of course, Mr.  
Buchanan and his niece Miss Lane.

Teresa eyes the crowd, and raises her voice a bit.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
And this, is my dear friend, Miss  
Elisabeth Shaw.

Heads turn at the mention of Lizzie's name. Sully smiles.

SULLY  
It's a pleasure to meet you all.

He reaches for Lizzie's hand.

SULLY (CONT'D)  
Miss Shaw.

LIZZIE  
Mr. Sullivan.

Teresa disperses champagne from a waiter's tray, raising her voice again.

TERESA  
A toast! To the cast. Bravissimo!

They raise their glasses, cheering. Teresa smiles at Fanny.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
Miss Morant. Is it true, you're  
taking over here as Manageress?

FANNY  
Yes. How did you know?

TERESA  
This is Washington. I'm excited to  
see what you do.

SULLY  
Miss Shaw, I've read about Last  
Island. It must have been a  
harrowing experience.

Teresa interjects, ramping up as she gets going.

TERESA  
Harrowing indeed, and remarkable.  
You'll have to join us next month.  
(MORE)

TERESA (CONT'D)

After the election of course. I'm hosting a soiree for Miss Shaw at her studio.

Lizzie eyes Teresa, who smiles, willing her to play along.

TERESA (CONT'D)

She'll tell her story, and display her wonderful photographs from the Island.

SULLY

I wouldn't miss it.

Sully turns to a waiting admirer. Lizzie whispers to Jack.

LIZZIE

I found the perfect place, but they won't rent to me without a responsible man on the lease.

FANNY

Miss Shaw, I'd love to talk with you about doing a photographic poster for our upcoming show. It would be an interesting way to modernize our front window displays.

LIZZIE

Yes. I would love that.

FANNY

We're rehearsing all week. Come to the theater any time, and we can go over ideas.

LIZZIE

I will, thank you.

Teresa takes Fanny over to meet someone. Lizzie turns to speak to Jack again.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

I brought prints to show you. Look. There's two of the hotel, and one of the village. You can see the beach beyond.

She hands several postcard sized photographs to Jack. He flips through them nodding.

JACK

These are great. I love the damaged emulsion on this one. It makes it look more authentic somehow.

LIZZIE

I have so many more, portraits of the people, views of the sea. How would you feel about splitting the proceeds, fifty fifty?

JACK

You want me to sign the lease.

LIZZIE

If I ask my grandfather he'll just say no. It's better if I just tell him after it's done. We'd split everything, not just the Last Island photos. Miss Morant's poster too. Everything I make, down the middle.

Jack is impressed by Lizzie's boldness.

JACK

Alright. Where's the place?

LIZZIE

It's above MacNeil's bakery, across from the theater.

Teresa and Fanny return, a waiter arrives with another round of champagne. Lizzie, Jack, Fanny, and Teresa grab new glasses to toast each other.

**END ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

26 EXT./INT. PENNSYLVANIA AVE/STUDIO - THE NEXT DAY 26

Lizzie waves to Jack waiting outside for her.

LIZZIE  
I'm so excited.

Jack and Lizzie walk down the avenue toward her new studio.

JACK  
You were right, it's an affordable rent, but they insisted on three months up front, even with my name on the contract, so there isn't much of your travel money left. We'll have to sell a bunch of prints to keep it going or you will need to ask your Grandfather to request money from the estate.

They reach the building and Jack stops and turns to Lizzie.

JACK (CONT'D)  
The keys to your new photo studio.

They climb up the stairs, and Lizzie unlocks the door. Sunlight streams from SKYLIGHTS set into high ceilings.

LIZZIE  
See. It's perfect.

Lizzie opens the wide windows, looking out at Washington.

27 INT. ZION BAPTIST - DAYS LATER 27

John leads Sarah through the church down a corridor to an office in the back, where Alice and Isabella are waiting.

ALICE  
Good afternoon Miss Brown. It's good to see you again.

SARAH  
Mrs. Hayden. Mrs. Wheeler.

Alice nods at John. He smiles apologetically at Sarah, before leaving and closing the door behind him. Alice sits behind a large wooden desk.

Isabella gestures to a couple of chairs placed across from the desk. She and Sarah sit. Sarah fidgets a little under Alice's gaze.

ALICE

How long has your family been free?

Taken aback, Sarah hesitates before speaking.

SARAH

My great, great grandmother.

ALICE

Four generations. Before the revolution. Do you understand the risk if you take part in this?

SARAH

Probably not. But I can't ignore my conscience.

ALICE

John said you wanted to do more than just medicine. What else can you offer?

SARAH

My work for Dr. Randolph's clinic sends me all over Washington, and my pass is backed by his bond. As a midwife, I'm allowed to be anywhere in the city at any time in order to attend a birth.

Alice nods slowly.

ALICE

Alright. Let me think on it. We can talk more next week.

Isabella gestures, and Sarah stands.

SARAH

Thank you.

John sits in the front pew, reading, and waiting for Sarah. He stands when she enters from the back hall.

SARAH

You didn't have to wait for me.

JOHN  
I wanted to. How did it go?

SARAH  
Good. I think. We'll talk again  
next week.

JOHN  
Are you sure you're ready for this?

SARAH  
I'm quite sure.

John takes her hand.

JOHN  
Can I walk you home?

SARAH  
I've got deliveries to do before I  
go back.

JOHN  
I'll see you tomorrow then.

John leans in to kiss Sarah.

29 EXT./INT. LIZZIE'S STUDIO - LATER

29

Sarah walks past the bakery into the alley behind it, where Lizzie is on the steps to her new studio with printing frames arrayed around her. She slides one of the frames closed, and counts down, closing each of them in turn.

LIZZIE  
Seven, six, five, close you, four,  
three, now you, two, one, and good.

Lizzie sees Sarah.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)  
Miss Brown! Hello.

SARAH  
Miss Shaw. It looks like you're  
making progress.

LIZZIE  
Yes, finally.

Lizzie gathers her printing frames in her arms.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)  
Come upstairs. What did you bring?

Sarah follows her up the stairs into the studio. There are framed photographs leaning against one wall. A portrait set with a painted backdrop dominates the main room.

SARAH  
I brought a version of your daily dose that can be done as a tea. I thought if you're going to be here most of the day,

Sarah pauses, sniffing the air.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Miss Shaw, the smell in here.

LIZZIE  
Oh, I'm sorry, I stop noticing it after a while.

Lizzie puts down the frames to open the windows as Sarah walks into the workroom.

SARAH  
You shouldn't use these chemicals without proper ventilation. They give off bad air.

LIZZIE  
I just forgot. I've been printing like mad.

Sarah looks at Lizzie's prints on the worktable.

SARAH  
Beautiful. I've never seen a photograph with clouds like this.

LIZZIE  
It's three different plates. I exposed one for the sky, one for the sea, and one for the shore, then printed them in succession on the same page. Monsieur LeGray inspired me, but I don't think even he has tried three.

SARAH  
Remarkable.

Sarah looks down at a portrait of a woman.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
This is your mother, isn't it? What  
a lovely portrait.

LIZZIE  
Did you ever meet her?

SARAH  
Once. She came to visit when you  
were a baby. I don't remember much.  
But your grandfather has a picture  
of her in his office that I've seen  
many times.

Sarah pulls a bag of herbs from her satchel and puts it on  
the worktable.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Use a pinch of this to make a cup  
of tea two or three times a day.  
And keep your windows open.

LIZZIE  
Thank you. I was about to mix some  
new chemistry. Do you want to stay  
for a minute?

SARAH  
I probably shouldn't. I still have  
deliveries.

LIZZIE  
It doesn't take that long. I can do  
the whole thing in a few minutes.

Sarah hesitates a moment longer before admitting,

SARAH  
I would like to see your process.

LIZZIE  
Perfect.

Lizzie pulls an apron off a hook and hands it to her.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)  
I'm trying something new, I think  
it will make the emulsion faster.  
You're going to have to model for  
me so we can test it.

Sarah ties on the apron and listens as Lizzie narrates mixing  
her chemistry.

30

INT. LIZZIE'S STUDIO - DAYS LATER

30

On the table, Walt Whitman's LEAVES OF GRASS, OPEN to it's controversial image of the author with his shirt unbuttoned. Sully is similarly dressed, standing in the center of the room surrounded by ACTRESSES in white.

Lizzie is high up on a ladder. Her camera is draped in black, on a tripod, balanced on a table, pointed straight down at Sully and red-haired actress, VIRGINIA SPENCER (white,23)

LIZZIE

Virginia, put your arms around his waist, and look up. Good. Alright, when I say go, everyone but Sully and Virginia, spin!

Lizzie removes the lens cap as Jack enters holding the paper.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

Go!

Sully and Virginia freeze, looking up into the lens. The actresses spin in place; their sleeves swirling around them.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six,

Jack watches, admiring Lizzie's artistry.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

Five, four, three, two, one. Good.  
We got it.

Lizzie puts the cap on the lens. The actors release their poses, and applaud. Lizzie climbs down with the camera-back.

FANNY

Incredible! I can't wait to see it.

JACK

You're not the only one.

Fanny pops open a bottle of champagne, and pours for all. Jack holds up the Evening Star, reading.

JACK (CONT'D)

Washington's newest artisan, Miss Elizabeth Shaw, the Last Island Heiress, seen entering her new studio with Mr. Peter Sullivan and company.

Jack pauses for effect, lowering his voice.

JACK (CONT'D)  
What could they be up to?

Fanny and Virginia burst out laughing. Lizzie blushes.

LIZZIE  
I wish they'd leave me alone.

FANNY  
What? You can't buy that kind of publicity. Jack, how long will it take to make the poster version?

JACK  
Once Lizzie's print is ready, we just need to photograph it with the big camera, and paint in the color. A day or so, three at most.

SULLY  
They'll come just to see the poster.

LIZZIE  
Then I better get this plate processed.

Virginia puts her hand on Lizzie's arm.

VIRGINIA  
Can I watch? I've never seen it.

Lizzie nods and Virginia follows her to the workroom.

JACK  
It's too bad this process is so expensive. I'd love to see Miss Shaw's Last Island photos as giant posters.

FANNY  
Oh. You just gave me the best idea.

She runs to the doorway of Lizzie's workroom.

FANNY (CONT'D)  
Lizzie, we have to send a telegram to Mrs. Sickles. She's going to love this!

Lizzie looks up at Fanny, curious.

31

INT. NATIONAL HOTEL TELEGRAPH OFFICE. - LATER

31

Lizzie enters to find Tempe standing with ruggedly handsome, REED BUTLER (White, 20's)

LIZZIE

Good evening, Miss Butler. It's good to see you again.

REED

It's Mrs. Butler, actually.

Tempe rolls her eyes, but smiles at him.

TEMPE

Miss Shaw, my husband, Mr. Reed Butler.

LIZZIE

A pleasure. Mrs. Butler, I need to send a telegram to Mrs. Sickles. We're moving the soiree to the National to make it a proper show.

TEMPE

That's exciting. Congratulations! We'll have to get tickets.

Tempe slides a message pad over to Lizzie.

32

INT. INFIRMARY - LATER

32

Dr. Randolph is reading the paper while Meg and Sarah make tinctures.

DR. RANDOLPH

Good Lord!

SARAH

Is everything alright?

DR. RANDOLPH

She's in the paper again. I should never have allowed her to rent that ridiculous studio. She's hysterical with grief.

SARAH

She is hardly hysterical.

DR. RANDOLPH

Excuse me?

SARAH

Her courses are regular, she's eating fine. Given everything she's been through, she seems much improved.

Dr. Randolph grabs his coat and hat.

DR. RANDOLPH

I disagree. She's consumed with this photography nonsense, and she's fallen in with those actors, jeopardizing her future. I can't let it go on. I'll be at the club waiting for election results. I'll see you both tomorrow.

Dr. Randolph slams the door behind him and Sarah turns to Meg, angry.

SARAH

You know she isn't hysterical.

A MESSENGER enters and hands a card to Meg. She opens it.

MEG

It's Mrs. Taylor. Take an umbrella, it's raining.

SARAH

It's not right, and you know it.

Sarah stares hard at Meg before gathering her things.

33

INT. TAYLOR HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

33

Sarah is shown into a bedroom. Lying on the bed is JANE TAYLOR. (White, 26) Jane sits up, slowly, as Sarah enters.

JANE TAYLOR

Miss Brown. Thank you for coming.

Sarah takes off her cloak and sets her bag on a nearby table.

JANE TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I was sure I felt the quickening just after I last saw you, but I haven't felt any movement since, and yesterday I started, bleeding.

SARAH

May I look?

Jane nods. Sarah lifts her skirts to examine her. She frowns at the tissue in the blood, and touches Jane's forehead, checking her temp.

JANE TAYLOR  
I'm sure it's nothing.

SARAH  
You have passed some tissue as well as blood, and you have a fever.

JANE TAYLOR  
I don't think so.

Sarah continues her exam. She touches Jane's belly, gently.

SARAH  
I'm sorry. I'm afraid the pregnancy has failed. The fever suggests you have an infection.

Jane starts to well up with tears.

JANE TAYLOR  
Are you sure?

SARAH  
I'm afraid so. You need to expel the failed pregnancy, or it will get worse.

Jane breaks down weeping. Sarah reaches into her bag and pulls out a tiny poultice wrapped in cotton. She puts her hand on Jane's back as she cries.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
You'll try again. I'm going to put this in now. This will help you.

Sarah reaches under Jane's skirts to insert it. Jane leans back weeping.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
I'm going to make you a tea, for your fever. I'll be right back.

Jane's reaches out and takes Sarah's hand, Sarah sits with her for a moment, before gently letting go.

In the light of a large candle, Lizzie sips champagne while she uses ink and a brush to paint out tiny flaws in a print.

Rain lashes against the skylights. A gust of wind knocks over a wooden easel.

Lizzie closes the window. Tipsy, she stumbles a little on her way back and has to reach out to steady herself. She doesn't notice that she spills a container nearby.

35 INT./EXT. TAYLOR HOUSE - LATER

35

Sarah sits beside the bed where Jane is finally sleeping. The door opens and CONGRESSMAN TAYLOR (White, 30) enters.

CONGRESSMAN TAYLOR  
What happened?

SARAH  
She'll be alright.

CONGRESSMAN TAYLOR  
The child?

SARAH  
I'm sorry.

Taylor stands there, looking at his wife, nodding sadly.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
I'll be back in the morning to  
finish her treatment. If she wakes,  
give her more of the tea.

He crosses to his wife's bed, and kneels next to her. Sarah leaves quietly. She walks down the stairs, and lets herself out the front door.

36 EXT./INT 13TH STREET - LIZZIE'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

36

Sarah walks down 13th street. As she nears Lizzie's studio, she sees what looks like embers in the window. She runs up the steps into the studio, where she finds Lizzie passed out, next to a candle that has fallen onto a stack of papers.

SARAH  
Miss Shaw!

Sarah sees flammable chemistry pooling near the pile of papers. She grabs a dark cloth off a hook and smothers the small fire with it. She frowns at all the empty champagne bottles. Lizzie wakes up, confused.

LIZZIE  
Miss Brown?

Lizzie coughs, then can't stop coughing. Sarah opens all the windows in the studio.

SARAH  
Can you stand?

LIZZIE  
Of course.

Lizzie tries to stand and sits back down hard.

SARAH  
You need fresh air.

Sarah helps Lizzie walk into the main room.

LIZZIE  
What happened?

SARAH  
You were drunk and you left a candle burning near a bunch of paper and chemicals.

LIZZIE  
Oh my God. Did any prints burn?

Lizzie jumps up and runs back into her workroom.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)  
No. No. No. I only had a little champagne.

She checks her table, relieved to find none of her prints or negatives damaged.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)  
Oh thank God. It's alright.

SARAH  
Only because I happened by. I can't believe I was just defending you. What were you thinking?

LIZZIE  
I didn't think I drank that much.

SARAH  
I told you. You have to keep the windows open when you're working here, and no drinking.

Defensive, Lizzie barks at Sarah.

LIZZIE

Alright!

Yelling makes Lizzie start coughing again, which makes her start crying. Sarah sighs, but is compassionate.

SARAH

Come on. I'll help you home. Your grandfather will be at his club, he won't know what time you got in.

Lizzie gathers herself and stands. Sarah helps her put on her coat. As they are about to leave, Lizzie stops.

LIZZIE

Wait.

She goes back into her workroom and comes out with her portrait of Sarah. She hands it over, sheepishly.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

It came out really good. You look beautiful.

SARAH

It is good. Thank you.

LIZZIE

The new emulsion worked well, but I think I can get an even better range of tones...

Sarah extinguishes the lantern, and helps Lizzie out the door, as she keeps talking.

37

INT. RANDOLPH FAMILY INFIRMARY - DAY

37

Sarah and Meg are filling orders. Sarah reads off a list as Meg pulls the herbs and puts them in small cotton bags.

SARAH

Mr. Andrews gets the standard dose plus peppermint for his indigestion. Mrs. Beals is on double black cohosh since starting the change.

MEG

Is Miss Dodson still up north? I can put her order aside.

A young midwife in a fine plaid dress, CHARITY DODSON (Af-Am 26), enters smiling.

CHARITY  
That won't be necessary.

SARAH  
Charity!

Sarah runs over to her friend, warmly embracing her.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
How was it?

CHARITY  
Boston alone was worth the trip.  
I've got postcards to show you when  
you're done here.

MEG  
Why don't you two go have a cup of  
tea and catch up. I can finish  
this.

SARAH  
Are you sure?

MEG  
Go on. Welcome home, Charity. Don't  
forget this.

Meg hands Charity her order, and smiles as they head out.

38 INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

38

Sarah pours a cup of tea for Charity and one for herself  
before they sit together near the hearth.

CHARITY  
This is good. One of your mom's?

SARAH  
My favorite. She makes it whenever  
she thinks I need cheering up.

CHARITY  
What's wrong? Trouble with the  
Reverend?

SARAH  
How do you already know about that?

CHARITY  
Please.

SARAH

No. Mrs. Taylor had another miscarriage.

CHARITY

Oh, poor thing. That's three in two years.

SARAH

She was so distraught. I wish I could've done more for her. I felt so helpless sitting with her while she cried.

CHARITY

I know. I hate those days.

SARAH

Me too. Now, postcards? I want to see everything. Tell me all about your trip.

CHARITY

Right after you tell me everything about Reverend Hayden. I need details, and more tea.

Sarah smiles at her, and gets up to refill their cups.

39

INT. WHITEHURST'S BACK ROOM - NIGHT

39

Jack and Lizzie are painting oversized versions of her Last Island photos. A tall stack of prints remain to be colorized.

LIZZIE

Thank you for helping me paint, and covering the cost of all these.

JACK

Happy to. Moving it to the theater is genius. We'll bring in enough to pay back everything we've spent, and pay for a year's rent at your studio. I'm sure of it. You'll be able to do whatever you want.

LIZZIE

I doubt that. Everyone seems determined to marry me off as soon as possible.

JACK

And that's not what you want?

Lizzie shakes her head.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Maybe you should join the  
Bachelor's club.

Lizzie giggles, then looks down at the half-colored portrait of her family, wistful again.

LIZZIE  
It doesn't matter. I can't have  
what I want anymore.

Jack picks up his brush and dips it in the paint.

JACK  
For what its worth, for me, work is  
always the way forward.

LIZZIE  
Agreed.

Lizzie dips her brush too and they continue painting.

40 INT. GUEST ROOM - MORNING

40

Dr. Randolph bursts into Lizzie's room, startling her awake. He shakes the paper at her.

DR. RANDOLPH  
"Miss Shaw seen at Whitehurst's  
after hours with Mr. Jack  
Stephenson. What sort of  
photography is done late at night,  
we wonder."

LIZZIE  
He's helping me get the show ready.

DR. RANDOLPH  
There will be no show. You are to  
stay in this room until I say  
otherwise. I've let this go on long  
enough.

LIZZIE  
No! We've already booked the  
theater, I can't just pull out now.

Lizzie watches helplessly as he packs up her things.

41

INT. INFIRMARY - LATER

41

Sarah and Meg are working. Dr. Randolph storms in.

DR. RANDOLPH

Lizzie is on rest cure. She is not to leave the guest room. I'll expect you to help me maintain a significant schedule of treatments.

He stares hard at Sarah, challenging her to argue.

SARAH

Understood.

Dr. Randolph storms out. Sarah eyes Meg.

MEG

Go on. Bring an atomizer in case he comes back while you're up there.

42

INT. GUEST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

42

Sarah enters Lizzie's now empty room. Lizzie is furious.

LIZZIE

He locked me in here and took all my things away. I'm trapped by his stupid cure. How long is he going to keep me locked in here? The show is in less than a month. I have to be ready.

Sarah looks at Lizzie for a long moment before answering.

SARAH

I'll bring you a pen and paper. Write to your friend Tempe. I'll take it to her. She can get word to your other friends. But you have to stop arguing with him. He believes this will help you. You have to pretend it has, or he'll never relent.

LIZZIE

I will. I will. Thank you.

Sarah leaves to get pen and paper while Lizzie paces, calmer but still fuming.

END ACT 2

ACT 3

43

INT. RANDOLPH HOUSE GUEST ROOM - TWO WEEKS LATER

43

The room is empty; a stark contrast to what it looked like before the "cure." Lizzie lays on the bed, depressed.

The sound of the door knocker echoing through the house shifts her demeanor and she quickly moves to the window. Looking down, she sees Jack and Fanny waiting, as her Grandfather opens the door.

Dr. Randolph is not pleased to see this duo again. Lizzie can hear their conversation.

DR. RANDOLPH

I've already told you this show is not going to happen.

FANNY

Dr. Randolph, please, everything is already in preparation. Investments have been made.

DR. RANDOLPH

Your investments are not my concern. My only concern is for my granddaughter. She needs rest, not agitation. Good day to you both.

Lizzie watches as Jack and Fanny turn away. Defeated, she slumps down on a chair near the window.

44

INT. JUSTICE TANEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

44

As Sarah sets up on a table near the hearth, she can hear Justice Taney talking with someone.

JUSTICE TANEY (O.S.)

No, he wants it the same week as the Inauguration.

Sarah adds fresh herbs to the atomizer. The voices get louder. Taney appears in the doorway.

JUSTICE TANEY (CONT'D)

Is it ready?

SARAH

Yes, sir.

He turns back to speak to the man in the hallway. Sarah can hear them clearly now.

JUSTICE TANEY  
At least seven to two, my friend.  
That's what Buchanan wants. Take  
this. Don't let anyone see it.

MAN (O.S.)  
Who else knows about these letters?

JUSTICE TANEY  
It doesn't matter. The election is  
over. Buchanan is determined to  
stop the bleeding in Kansas. Mr.  
Scott and his ilk will be back  
where they belong, and this country  
can finally settle down.

Sarah listens, frowning. Justice Taney returns and sits down.

JUSTICE TANEY (CONT'D)  
Let's begin.

Sarah masks her emotions as she pours steaming water into the atomizer.

45 EXT./INT. RANDOLPH HOUSE - DAYS LATER

45

Teresa, wearing her signature crimson, and holding a large box, knocks firmly on the front door. After a moment Dr. Randolph opens the door.

TERESA  
Doctor Randolph, Good morning. I'm  
Mrs. Sickles. Congressman Sickles'  
wife.

DR. RANDOLPH  
Mrs. Sickles, I'm afraid my  
granddaughter is not receiving  
visitors.

TERESA  
It's you I've come to see. May I?

He opens the door and steps aside to let Teresa lead the way to the front parlor. She hands him the box, and he puts it aside as they sit awkwardly.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
May I speak frankly?

Dr. Randolph nods.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
 I believe we share a common purpose; to see Miss Shaw well married and settled in a life appropriate to her position. But I am afraid you are under a misapprehension. You think the press will lose interest in her if you keep her hidden away.

Dr. Randolph frowns but refrains from interrupting her.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
 They will not, and it will only get worse. However, if instead of keeping her locked up, you do as I suggest, she will be engaged by the end of the season.

DR. RANDOLPH  
 (Intrigued) Alright. I'm listening.

Teresa smiles winningly.

46 INT. RANDOLPH HOUSE GUESTROOM - EVENING 46

Sarah prepares an atomizer treatment for Lizzie.

LIZZIE  
 Thank you. I know it was a risk to get that letter out.

SARAH  
 Worth it. You'll be able to tell your story, and honor the family you lost. I'm happy for you.

She hands Lizzie the atomizer mouthpiece. As Lizzie inhales the steam, Sarah looks through an open box of pictures, stopping at the image of Lizzie's family. Lizzie takes off the mask.

LIZZIE  
 I need to make them proud.

SARAH  
 I'm sure you already have.

They look down at the family portrait.

LIZZIE

That was just before they evacuated everyone to the hotel...

47

INT. NATIONAL THEATER MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

47

Now life-sized, Lizzie's family portrait is suspended over the stage in a giant gilt frame.

LIZZIE

When it seemed the worst was over, I slipped out without telling anyone, determined to retrieve my camera.

Lizzie is flanked by actresses in flowing blue gowns.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

The wind picked up when I reached the house, and it started raining again. I grabbed my camera and as many glass negatives as I could carry, and started back. But it was too late. I heard the noise before I saw it.

The light on the portrait goes out and a dark curtain falls across the frame.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

The hotel collapsed and washed into the sea before my eyes. My parents, my brother, everyone. One hundred thirty souls, gone in an instant. There was no time for sorrow. I paused a moment to say a prayer, and then ran for higher ground.

48

INT. NATIONAL THEATER PRIVATE LOUNGE - LATER

48

The crowded lounge is decorated with Lizzie's oversized pictures. Waiters distribute champagne and canapés.

Teresa, Jack, and Fanny are surrounded by WELL-WISHERS. The doors open. Lizzie enters to applause. Teresa gestures for more champagne.

TERESA

A toast!

She waits for everyone to have a glass, then raises hers.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
The artist, Miss Shaw!

They drink to Lizzie's success. Lizzie raises her own glass.

LIZZIE  
Miss Morant, and the National!

Fanny curtseys. Teresa embraces Lizzie as everyone crowds around them.

TERESA  
You were perfect!

JACK  
We sold out. Even the ones on the walls. I've started taking orders.

LIZZIE  
What? That's incredible!

A receiving line forms. First up are Tempe and Reed.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)  
Tempe! Mrs. Butler, I'm so glad you came.

TEMPE  
It was remarkable. An your pictures are beautiful. Congratulations! We bought a print, would you sign it?

Reed hands Lizzie a print, and a pen.

LIZZIE  
Of course! How kind. Thank you.

Lizzie signs their print, and they move on to let the next person in line greet her.

The church is decked out for a grand ball. The pews have been cleared to make room for an orchestra. Waltzing COUPLES dressed in their finest, spin through the room. Sarah and Isabella are seated together at a table in one corner.

SARAH  
He said Buchanan is determined to stop the bleeding in Kansas and then he mentioned Dred Scott by name.

The song ends, and Charity, her HUSBAND, and Harold come over to the table, chatting.

ISABELLA  
So, he's pressuring the Court.

CHARITY  
Who's pressuring the Court?

SARAH  
Buchanan. Apparently he's been writing to the Justices.

CHARITY  
Is that legal? Can he do that?

ISABELLA  
It has to be something major, not a narrow ruling.

SARAH  
He said, "Mr. Scott and his ilk will be back where they belong."

John arrives with a tray of hot chocolate. He sits down next to Sarah.

JOHN  
Who's Mr. Scott? Hot chocolate?

Everyone takes a cup.

SARAH  
Dred Scott. They heard the case back in February, but they set more arguments for this month.

JOHN  
He's the one that says he's free because his owner took him to live in free states?

SARAH  
(nodding) Justice Taney was talking about it. They're planning something.

HAROLD  
I don't know how you can stand to be around that old ghoul. Whatever he's planning for Mr. Scott, I guarantee it won't be manumission.

ISABELLA

Are you going back there? Can you  
find out more?

SARAH

Maybe. He usually falls asleep  
after his treatment. I might be  
able to get into his study.

ISABELLA

See if you can get a look at one of  
the letters.

HAROLD

Why? What is the point? What are  
you going to do, report him?

JOHN

Alright. Enough politics. This is  
supposed to be a party.

Charity lifts her mug and grins at John.

CHARITY

Indeed. Here's to you Reverend. I  
can't believe you finally got  
serious Sarah over here to a ball.

John drains his cup of hot chocolate and stands, offering his hand to Sarah.

JOHN

And now Miss Serious Sarah, may I  
have this dance?

Sarah smiles, and takes his hand, she shoots a look at Charity who laughs. The music swells, and John sweeps them both out on to the dance floor.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You look beautiful tonight.

Sarah grins up at him.

SARAH

Thank you. So do you.

John laughs, delighted. They glide through the room in perfect step.

50

INT./EXT. NATIONAL THEATRE - NIGHT

50

The crowd has thinned. Teresa's husband catches her eye and looks pointedly at the clock.

TERESA

It is getting late. Thank you all for a wonderful evening. Miss Shaw, we'll talk tomorrow?

Lizzie nods. Teresa bows to the group, and leaves with her husband.

FANNY

Sully and I have to go too.

JACK

Thank you for a phenomenal evening. I'll escort Miss Shaw home.

LIZZIE

No. I don't want to go home yet.

SULLY

Why don't you both come with us?

LIZZIE

Yes!

JACK

That is not a good idea.

SULLY

It's just a party.

Jack looks dubious but follows everyone outside, where a light snow has started to fall. They line up for a hack.

LIZZIE

It's so pretty.

The group in front of them pulls away, and a carriage pulls up. They all climb in together.

51

INT./EXT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

51

The party is over. The church is all cleaned up.

ALICE

I'm going to bed. It was lovely to see you again, Sarah.

SARAH

Goodnight, Mrs. Hayden. Thank you.  
I've never seen a finer winter  
ball.

ALICE

You two be mindful of curfew.

Alice leaves, and John takes Sarah's hand.

JOHN

C'mon, I want to show you  
something.

He leads her around the pulpit, up a set of back stairs, to  
the roof.

They walk out to the roof's edge under a light snow. In the  
distance, rows of gaslights illuminate the Capitol building  
under construction. Giant girders stick out where the new  
dome is being built.

SARAH

This is beautiful.

John leans in to kiss Sarah. She wraps her arms around him,  
standing on her tip-toes to return the kiss. After a long  
moment, John looks into Sarah's eyes.

JOHN

We should go, it's almost curfew.

Sarah looks up at him. They kiss again, for even longer.

SARAH

I don't want to go.

JOHN

Then stay.

Sarah grins, and they embrace again.

END ACT 3

ACT 4

52 INT. MARY ANN HALL'S HOUSE, DRESSING ROOM - LATER 52

Fanny leads Lizzie into a parlor with rich upholstered furniture and full length mirrors covering two walls. She checks behind a screen hiding a chamber pot to be sure they are alone.

FANNY

Do you understand what we're going into? You know this is a parlor house?

LIZZIE

It's like a high class brothel?

FANNY

It's more than that.

Fanny explains as she fixes her hair.

FANNY (CONT'D)

The owner is not just a madam. She is, an influencer. Tonight several prominent philanthropists have been invited on my behalf. Next week the National Theater will get a slew of new donations.

Fanny helps Lizzie adjust her fall, pinning back a wisp of short hair.

FANNY (CONT'D)

Take it slow with the champagne. It can sneak up on you, and try to be inconspicuous.

Lizzie and Fanny head out to the main parlor.

53 INT. MARY ANN HALL'S MAIN PARLOR - CONTINUOUS 53

The Luxurious parlor is filled with well-dressed GUESTS chatting and drinking champagne.

Lizzie recognizes several of the actresses from the theater. She looks around for Jack and Sully, and sees Mary Ann Hall (White, 50's) walking toward them. Fanny greets Mary Ann with a small curtsey.

FANNY

Miss Hall. Thank you so much for hosting.

MARY ANN

My pleasure. Miss Shaw, this is a surprise.

FANNY

You know each other?

MARY ANN

No, but I've followed her story, and I've heard of tonight's triumph. Please, enjoy yourselves. Miss Shaw, there are reporters here, so do yourself a favor and go by Miss Smith.

Lizzie smiles and curtseys. Mary Ann puts a hand on her shoulder before moving on.

54

INT. MARY ANN HALL'S HOUSE - LATER

54

Lizzie has a full glass of champagne. She and Virginia scream with laughter and join in on the chorus as Sully sings a particularly bawdy tune at the piano. Jack stands in a corner with Mary Ann.

Sully finishes the song and gestures for Lizzie to join him at the piano. She whispers in his ear as she sits down. The raucous crowd quiets down as Sully plays the opening bars to the new Stephen Foster song, "Gentle Annie." Lizzie's voice is clear and strong.

LIZZIE

(Singing) Thou wilt come no more  
gentle Annie, like a flower thy  
spirit did depart...

The whole room listens, many openly weeping by the end. Mary Ann nods to Jack.

JACK

Miss Smith, Mr. Sullivan that was a gift none of us will soon forget. Truly. But, it's getting late.

Jack puts his hand on Sully's shoulder.

JACK (CONT'D)

We should see Miss Smith home.

LIZZIE

No. Let's have another drink.

SULLY

He's right. It's time.

VIRGINIA

We'll all go. We can walk you home  
on our way.

LIZZIE

But not home, back to my studio.

Lizzie and the ladies chat on their way to the dressing room.

55 EXT./INT. LIZZIE'S STUDIO - NEAR DAWN

55

Sully and Jack sweep snow off the steps leading up to  
Lizzie's studio. Lizzie lights a lantern in the main room as  
the ladies enter and start taking off their wet clothes.  
Lizzie turns to Sully and Jack.

LIZZIE

Aren't you coming in?

JACK

We just wanted to make sure you got  
back safely.

LIZZIE

Thank you for today, and tonight.

Virginia and the actresses call out for Lizzie to join them.  
Sully takes Lizzie's hand and kisses it.

SULLY

Goodnight Miss Shaw.

LIZZIE

Goodnight, Gentleman.

Lizzie closes the door and turns to the ladies in the studio.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

Should I make some coffee?

Virginia opens her coat, revealing three bottles of champagne

VIRGINIA

Not yet! Grab some glasses?

Lizzie goes over to a table near the windows. Behind her, the ladies start singing. Lizzie looks out at the snow. She sees Jack and Sully at the base of the steps.

Sully leans in, and starts kissing Jack; slowly and gently at first, then with more passion. Lizzie watches them, spellbound. Virginia is suddenly close behind her.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)  
Glasses? We can't let it get warm.

Lizzie turns away, flushed. She picks up several glasses.

LIZZIE  
No chance, it's freezing in here.  
You pour, I'll get the stove going.

Virginia easily opens the champagne and starts pouring.

56 INT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH - DAWN, THE NEXT MORNING 56

Sarah wakes up in John's arms; both of them still dressed, lying on a couch in the church's family rooms. She tries to extricate herself without waking him, but he stirs, and smiles at her.

JOHN  
Good Morning.

SARAH  
Hi. I've got to go. I have to change before I go to Justice Taney's.

JOHN  
Be careful. Don't let my sister goad you into anything stupid. I'll see you tomorrow?

She nods, and kisses John one more time before tearing herself away.

57 INT. LIZZIE'S STUDIO - LATER THAT MORNING 57

Morning sunlight fills the studio. Lizzie and Virginia sit close together talking and sharing the last of the champagne. Actresses FREDDIE DOUGHERTY and EDITH VICORY sleep on a bed of fabric and dresses, using their coats as blankets.

VIRGINIA  
Its cold again.

LIZZIE

The stove keeps going out.

Lizzie goes over to the stove to get the fire going.

VIRGINIA

What time is it?

LIZZIE

Almost eight.

VIRGINIA

Coffee? We have a matinee at one.

Freddie wakes up, which wakes Edith up.

FREDDIE

Why is it so cold?

LIZZIE

It'll warm up. I'm making coffee.

The actresses huddle under their coats waiting for coffee.

58

EXT./INT. JUSTICE TANEY'S APARTMENT - LATER

58

Back in her work clothes, Sarah smiles to herself as she turns into the alley and climbs the steps to the back entrance. She knocks, and waits until Ellen opens the door.

ELLEN

Miss Brown. I'm glad you're here.

Come in.

Sarah enters through the back door. Ellen takes a kettle off the stove, talking as she leads Sarah through the apartment.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I've got your hot water. He's in his study. He wants you to do it in there. I'm sorry, I have to go to the market, and our girl is off visiting her mother. Can you do everything by yourself?

Sarah nods. Ellen shows her into the study. Justice Taney is seated at his desk, he looks up as Sarah enters.

JUSTICE TANEY

Finally. I was coughing all night.

ELLEN

I'll be back as soon as I can.

Justice Taney waves at Ellen, distracted. She leaves. He points at a chair by the fire.

JUSTICE TANEY  
Set it up over there.

Sarah sets up the atomizer. Justice Taney struggles to stand and walk over to the chair. He sits down with a sigh, and starts coughing.

SARAH  
Can you hold the mask?

Taney nods, and snatches the mask from her hands, annoyed. He holds it up to his face.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Deep breath.

Sarah adds more water to the atomizer.

59 INT. LIZZIE'S STUDIO - LATER

59

The actresses stand near the stove sipping coffee. Lizzie looks at their figures, silhouetted under their shifts by the strong morning sunlight. Suddenly she leaves the room, and comes back with her camera.

VIRGINIA  
What are you doing?

Lizzie preps a plate, slides it into the camera, grabs a black cloth, throws it over, and ducks underneath.

UNDER THE CLOTH - Sharp, but upside down in the frame, Virginia and Freddie both grin, and pose.

LIZZIE  
Hold still. Freeze. You all look so beautiful.

Lizzie counts down. After several seconds, she pops out from under the cloth, and replaces the cap.

She runs into her workroom to process the plate. Virginia grins, and pulls her chemise entirely off.

In her workroom Lizzie puts the plate into a bath of silver nitrate and watches as it develops.

VIRGINIA (O.S.)  
Lizzie!

Lizzie moves the plate into a bath of water. She rocks the tray, revealing a negative image of the actresses. She returns to the main room and stops wide-eyed, when she sees the ladies standing in the same tableau, nude.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)  
How do we look now?

LIZZIE  
I'll get another plate.

VIRGINIA  
In a minute.

Virginia reaches for her, pulling her in close. They kiss; a deep passionate embrace. Freddie steps closer. Lizzie takes off her own chemise. She leans over to kiss Freddie, then Edith, and then Virginia again.

60 INT. JUSTICE TANEY'S STUDY - LATER

60

Sarah stokes the fire, watching Justice Taney sleep. She looks over at his desk, gathers her courage, and sneaks over to it, still holding the poker, one eye on Taney.

She picks up a letter, intending to read it, but the document underneath catches her eye. It is a draft of the Dred Scott opinion. Sarah glances at Taney, willing him to stay asleep.

She scans the draft, appalled by what she reads.

Phrases stand out, searing into her brain. "A free negro of the African race, who's ancestors were sold as slaves, is not a 'citizen.'" "No rights under the Constitution."

Sarah glares at Justice Taney sleeping by the fire. She looks back at the draft opinion, reading...

Justice Taney stirs in his chair. Sarah jumps, startled.

She puts the letter back down on the desk, crosses to Taney, and stands there staring down at him, gripping the poker, seething with rage.

THE END