

SARA. No?

MISSY SUE. No.

SARA. What can I do for you? Fix you supper? They barely give me a full slice of beef and some jars of rice, but I guess you gon' take that if you wants it, so –

Start

MISSY SUE. I want to talk to you. Privately. Woman to woman.

SARA. Woman to...woman?

MISSY SUE. I know you don't have reason to understand anything that I'm going to tell you, but I'm here to help you, Sara.

SARA. I'm doing fine out here, thank you. Being a slave has its days, but it's alright.

MISSY SUE. Sara, that's not true.

SARA. It isn't?

MISSY SUE. Being a slave is horrible.

SARA. It is?

MISSY SUE. And I can't bear to see someone I love in such horrible conditions.

SARA. Me?

MISSY SUE. Yes, Sara. You.

SARA. You love me?

MISSY SUE. I always have. I just didn't have the courage to tell you. But something about having everything stripped of you as a woman...you find your bravery.

(SARA looks at MISSY SUE. This is all strange as hell. How is she going to get out of this?)

SARA. I would've never guessed that one, Missy Sue.

MISSY SUE. Sara, you've been a dear friend to me and I wasn't kind as a young girl. It wasn't the way I wanted

to be. It was simply the circumstances, you understand? In truth, you've always been the best friend I ever had. You would listen to me. You would nurse my wounds. You would play dolls with me and read books with me and let me dream without telling me that it's silly or insignificant.

SARA. That's what I'm supposed to do. I'm a slave.

(Sobering for MISSY SUE.)

MISSY SUE. Right. That's a good point, Sara. Still. It meant something. It's taken up a place in my heart.

SARA. Glad to make you feel loved, Missy.

MISSY SUE. And I want you to feel loved, Sara.

SARA. I do. By my brother, Abner. By my mama Carrie Lynn 'fo the knight riders took her for trying to steal me a piece of honeydew. I known deep love before.

MISSY SUE. I want you to feel the ultimate love, Sara.

SARA. What kind of love is that?

MISSY SUE. Freedom.

End

(SARA pauses. Looks at MISSY SUE. These magic words come with a lot of skepticism. And allure.)

SARA. What you –

MISSY SUE. I know Abner was here recently, Sara.

SARA. I can't speak to or verify that Missy –

MISSY SUE. You don't have to. I know it. I know because I know the men he is crossing westward with. They are Union soldiers, Sara. And they are fighting for your freedom.

SARA. Without me?

MISSY SUE. Well, Papa says they're fighting to preserve states' rights, but your freedom is coming with it, like it or not.

SARA. It is?

MISSY SUE. But only if we ensure the success of the Union.

SARA. How you gonna do that?

MISSY SUE. I'm going to do it with your help.

SARA. My help?

MISSY SUE. I'm going to get you a position inside the house. Papa has promised me. For all my woes and for feeling blue, he'll grant me whatever I desire.

SARA. And you desire for me to work in the big house?

MISSY SUE. Yes. That's it Sara. And then you and I will be able to talk in the open. And no one will suspect a thing. And you will clean Papa's office. And listen as he instructs his fellow councilmembers on the progression of the Confederacy. And you and I together will gather a list of information. And then you'll give it to your brother when he returns.

SARA. Abner is a runaway, Missy. He ain't returning 'til we free.

MISSY SUE. He'll return. It's already been addressed among the higher ranks. And you'll pass him information, Sara. That you and I gather from Papa.

SARA. I think maybe you might be a bit mistaken, Missy.

MISSY SUE. It's because you don't trust me, is that it? You think I'm just setting you up to get Abner caught and hung?

SARA. ...

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MISSY SUE. Okay, I understand your doubts Sara. Truly I do. But we are women, are we not? Both barren as winter. Isn't there something inherent that you can sense in your fruitless womb? Something that tells you a pure intention of loyalty?

SARA. ...

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MISSY SUE. It's late Sara. You need rest. I'll return in the morning with the order to reassign you. Think. Pray. Read the Bible in your satchel.

SARA. What / Bible?

MISSY SUE. Let the voice of God lead you to your answer. You and I, Sara, we've never belonged where we were. And now is time for both of us to step into our destinies. This is the only thing I can bear, Sara. The gift of freedom. To those who I've always loved the most.

(MISSY SUE walks over to SARA and gives her a kiss on the mouth.)

Goodnight, Sara.

(And she leaves.)

(SARA is dumbfounded.)