

Glass Houses

Chapter 1: Eureka

On a crisp Autumn morning between the first sips of fresh coffee and anxiety. During the period of older heavier leaves shedding their places off of their noble perches. Sits two professors, The portly Dr. Evan Mabis who's silver locks are rarely seen through his raven dyed hair contrasted with his white goatee, and the arrogant but seldom wrong Dr. Otto Lauenburg, a man despite his age with the physical stature that was as strong as his mind. These two tenured professors don't even realize the start of a new day as they have been exhaustingly debating theories throughout the night. From Einstein's Relativity to pop culture's flux capacitor, they ponder one burning question. Is time travel possible?

"The Bell" exclaimed Dr. Mabis "The one thing that you can not dispute is The Bell"

Dr. Lauenburg who went by the name Dr. Otto paced back and forth tapping his pencil feverishly upon his lips, while he tried to find a contradiction to the argument presented.

"OK" Dr. Otto admitted. "Ok, let's go through it step by step. The Nazi Bell was a German project during World War II that was supposed to be one of Hitler's wonder weapons. That was fashioned after the Hindu Vimana flying palaces.

They used tons of Mercury because of the special properties of the liquid metal."

"Like its ability to stay a liquid at room temp and its conductivity even as a gas" interjects Dr. Mabis.

"Yes, but it also was contained in a gyroscope which helped excite the metal making it some kind of living entity" invokes Dr. Otto

“Like how the Earth spins on its axis and it inhales and exhales through nature like a living entity” Dr. Mabis claims.

“Like a parallel version,” Dr. Otto softly admits.

“String theory before string theory” whispers Dr. Mabis

“Parallel universes, space travel” a long pause falls upon Dr. Mabis before his lip stammers and the words they most wanted to say fell out “Time Travel”.

Three years later under the guise of a worldwide energy-producing generator, the two doctors find themselves under university pressure, over their heads in production, and fruitless with discovery.

“Gentleman”, cried the intolerant Dean, with his pressed suit and perfectly groomed mustache positioned upon a face which was only a couple of shades lighter than his copper-colored tie

“This institution has been more than patient with you in regards to your, and I quote ‘World-changing technological advancement’ without any results, demonstrations, or even supporting data to back up what I now surmise as a ridiculous claim”.

As Dr. Mabis tried to respond he found himself sharply cut off by the dean who saw this meeting as a monologue, to dictate the future of the professors and the time and money spent on a secret project.

“We will no longer fund your activities on your acorned shaped generator, effective immediately, because of your tenure here we had invested in what we thought was our best and brightest, but now you have placed this university into a place of severe financial restraint and I have no other choice but to revoke your tenure. You have until the end of this semester to get your affairs in order”. explained the agitated dean.

"I'm sorry, did you just fire us?" wondered Dr. Otto

"I've dedicated my life to these hallowed grounds. This is absurd" cried Dr. Mabis

"Yes, yes, yes... this is my ruling and it is absolutely final. Good day gentlemen".

The resolve of the dean was as stern as the starched collar that covered his Windsor knotted necktie.

Broken and disgruntled the pair retreated to a nearby eatery to drown their sorrows in cheap draft beer. When she walked in. The new professor, young, attractive, smart, an upstart compared to the crash and burn twins who can't figure out how to change the world. Slinking down in their chairs trying to avoid eye contact after such a humiliating day, the young upstart's gaze fixed upon the table and she promptly walked over to converse with her colleagues.

"Dr. Mabis, Dr. Otto" greeted the young lady.

"Greetings Dr. Parks" the two men begrudgingly replied.

"Doctors, I'm still working on my doctorate, so I'm still only a professor." Ms. Parks tried to clumsily explain to the doctors. Born Anna Louise Parks from Medford New Jersey, this young woman's storied life of High test scores, cheerleading, upper middle class, most popular and likely to succeed-background, has given her unshakeable confidence even amongst her more experienced peers.

"So what's eating you two". She unexpectedly asks.

"Our experiment"

"Mabis!" interjected Dr. Otto

"Really Otto? It's the ninth inning and this is our last batter". cried Mabis

"We have an idea that involves a giant gyroscope, and Mercury we can get it started but it's supposed to generate a field of distortion, a ring of power and energy but it doesn't" declared Dr. Mabis.

Anna Shakes her head in agreement with the information and as she processes it She utters "You are looking for a reaction from a gyroscope and Mercury".

"Yes," said Dr. Mabis.

"Have you tried fire" expresses Anna?

"Why would we do that"? scoffs Dr. Otto.

"Because if you look at this problem naturally you are missing an element" Anna explains.

"An element"? Dr. Mabis asks in bewilderment.

The young woman pulls out a pen and a pad and starts to draw.

"With Mercury, you have two elements already combining Earth by it being a mineral and water by its shape, and form. The wind comes in by the power of your gyroscope but you don't have enough fire. Your experiment needs more heat to conduct the extra energy you are trying to achieve". Dr. Otto's continence falls as Dr. Mabis gasps for breath.

"My sweet girl, how did you come up with that answer?" Dr. Mabis implored.

"Don't you hear it." she asked. "September it's playing on the radio right now" Anna was speaking about The classic 70's song September sung by the band Earth Wind and Fire. Her brilliant but light-hearted stroke of genius was inspired by an R&B group who made the song before she was even born. Yet her hypothesis stood, it was worth a try

for the two doctors who had tried everything else and were running out of time to rewrite their fate.

Four weeks later with Ms. Parks intricately woven into the dastardly project. She finds herself extremely driven. Not only as a help to her esteemed comrades but also to prove herself as a groundbreaking scientist.

“More power” yells Anna.

“More power” responds Dr. Otto.

“The Mercury is boiling” exclaims Dr. Mabis.

“Initiating the gyroscope” Anna bellows

“30 thousand revolutions per min - 33.7, 41.8, 46, 49.2, 50 thousand revolutions per minute and counting!” an excited Dr. Otto shouts.

“Now” screams Anna.

The pad underneath the newly constructed Bell begins to produce a glowing orange light generating the extra heat or fire described by Anna and with that came a muted boom that was felt more than heard. As the trio un-recoiled from the seismic blast, their eyes focus on an object that is suspended in mid-air with no assistance from anything. A hovering illuminating craft that made no sound, as imaged in the old photos of the original Nazi Bell. The recreation was chained by the midsection to keep it in place.

“Look, Otto, look at the top of the Bell” cried Dr. Mabis.

The length of the chains in proportion to the height of the craft gave it just enough room to float not only to the ceiling but partially out as well. The group rushed outside to see the vehicle was not passing through the roof.

“Look at the discoloration of the ceiling, that’s not a hole in the roof, that’s a vortex between space and time” reflected Dr. Otto.

As the scientist powered down the vessel emotions and theories sprang forth with the same velocity as hope and optimism.

“This is our opportunity to rub the nose of our dean in the mess he made with our careers” Dr. Otto piously boasted.

“Yes, yes... Let’s go right now” the spirited Dr. Mabis encouraged.

Eagerly awaiting an answer from the dean after a lengthy but satisfying presentation the only word that sprang forth from the dean was.

“No!” the unimpressed dean answered.

And just like that joy corroded into disappointment. Nothing said, shown or otherwise was going to change the mind of the dean. The disillusioned bunch slithered back into their lab with the knowledge of their end at the university.

Dr. Mabis frustrations brought on a slight stutter.

“We, We, We should not give up, W-eee should fight” struggled Dr. Mabis

“No, Mabis, the only way to change our future now is to change our future” exclaimed Dr. Otto.

“We don’t know if the wretched thing works. It can be a tiny black hole for all we know, we can’t even control it” barked the angry Dr. Mabis.

“Sure we can, electro-encephalography”. Dr. Otto deduced

“Like the controls of a drone ”. interjects Anna.

“Exactly”. Dr. Otto says

“We can use WiFi to send a remote signal to direct it through the wormhole and go whenever and wherever we want, just like the ancient Vimanas of India ”. The cheerful Dr. Otto exclaims.

As the bunch configured the elaborate remote-controlled device. The increasingly annoyed dean looking beyond the four corners of his office window contemplates the audacity of the two lame-duck professors seeking an audience when his word on the matter was crystal clear. To challenge the dean was like challenging the wisdom of the institution, which can not be overthrown. The dean swiftly leaves his chair and signals campus security to follow him as he makes his way through the sprawling campus en route to the charlatans occupying his scientific laboratories.

While Anna takes a drag off her cigarette her relaxation switches to panic and choking as she sees the caravan of security approaching with the dean.

“The dean is coming with a boatload of security, I think if we’re going to do this now is the time” cried Anna.

“But we haven’t tested it” screams Dr. Mabis.

“We can tell that story during our Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, old friend. Let's launch this bird and literally make history” claimed Dr. Otto.

With a few flips of the switches the mighty craft inhaled the breath of life, and as the defiant crew looked on to the startled guards and dean below. The brash and brazen Dr. Otto cried out aloud.

“If we can’t change your mind now maybe we can change it later” he yells. And with that they all disappear behind the crafts door. The dean and his men clouded with confusion. Is this some type of plane, a weapon, or an unstable invention about to

explode. As they scramble to find a safe distance the surrounding air becomes still, as if the world was responding in slow motion and then, nothing. No craft, No doctors, just emptiness where they were.

Chapter 2:Black to the Future

Contrasted from the point of view of the dean, joy, and victory was the overwhelming emotion inside the Bell. Although the outside was smooth and without windows, the inside gave a panoramic view with giant monitors that displayed everything that was going on outside the ship. The large chairs that each crew member sat in had a push button that automatically unfolded and raised a plexiglass table with an integrated surface like a tablet that gave them access to manual controls, but voice commands were also installed to guide them through the mighty wormhole.

Chuckles blurt out as they watch the dean and his band of muscle run for cover.

“Where to?” Dr. Mabis asks.

“How about last year to show that pompous windbag how great our invention is” Dr. Otto responded.

An enthused Dr. Mabis who has always done everything by the book finds himself on the opposite side of the line and in doing so he makes an un-Dr. Mabis like mistakes. as he manually enters in the correct month and day he neglects to put in a year. Regardless of the misstep, a tear in space and time opens above the craft like an eyelid separating itself to reveal a great iris that the oddly shaped vessel was instinctively drawn to.

Once past the great rip it quickly closed behind them, and the iris started to look like a huge tunnel at that distance, with walls made out of sheets of water as if the group

was hanging ten off the coast of Maui riding on a giant wave. Through the water, they can see a distorted view of the top of the university as if the Bell actually passed through the roof, but none of this was seen by the people on the ground who were going about their daily business. Above The Bell, the tunnel stretched far beyond the university out through the heavens, long and far through deep space.

While the doctors and the esteemed Ms. Parks looked on at the impossible with glee and wonderment. The Bell shot through the wormhole faster than a bullet in flight.

“How fast are we going?” Anna inquired.

“We never put in a speedometer to calculate space-time,” Dr. Mabis answered.

Unbuckling his seatbelt and walking towards a monitor, Dr. Otto’s face glows with the light of stars going by as streaks.

“Fascinating, we are going through the cosmos faster than any rocketship, but yet we feel no inertia, the force of gravity has no power over us yet we have stable gravity here.” as dr. Otto points to the floor.

“The gyro is giving us our own gravity field” Dr. Mabis concludes. Both men start laughing and celebrating the precedent re-discovery of the Bell.

“But, how far are we going? It seems to be shooting us very far into space.” cried Anna.

“Your right, the farther you go away from the planet the more time changes on your re-entry” said Dr. Otto.

After the desperate crew screamed out commands to an unresponsive craft they all tried vigorously to manually control the Bell, but still without success.

“We got to do something Otto.” cried Dr. Mabis.

“I know Mabis, I know try cutting some of the power”

By decreasing the electrical charge, the wormhole reacted in a peculiar way. The wall of water which seemed to flow upward suddenly reversed into an almost toilet like flush, which propelled the craft back from where it came. In this scenario the gravity in the cabin has also decreased which plunged its passengers so far into their chairs that a paralyzing grip clasped each individual into place. With no control over the vessel and speeding ferociously back to Earth, the group is helplessly at the mercy of fate.

The sudden disruption causes the wormhole to start splintering like digits on a hand with some landing on different parts of the Earth and some going past the planet altogether. The Bell miraculously goes through one of the digits that strikes the Southern part of the United States blazing through the night sky like a brilliant comet. Carving through a hill side hurling trees out of its way like a mighty plow, the Bell goes off a cliff but its momentum carries it across a lake up on dry land and through the entrance to a cave that disrupts the sanctuary of the local bats.

“Is everybody all right,” Dr. Mabis asks?

“I’m a little banged up, but I’m all right.” cried Anna

“Me too.” responded Dr. Otto

“Where are we?” asked Dr. Mabis

“I don’t know, pull up the dashboard and let’s find out.” said Dr. Otto

“There’s no reading!” cried Anna

The dented and dinged ship went from heavy malfunctions to lifeless, as all controls stopped working and the large screens began to grow dark, the crew faced with

no other choice had to venture outside the craft to figure out where and or when they were.

“I hope there’s oxygen out there.” said Anna.

“Well Anna, we’re about to find out the hard way.” Boasted Dr. Otto.

As the doors of the wedged craft parted and its crew began to peek their curious heads from her belly. The darkened surroundings they were in suddenly opened up to brilliant sounds and color as if they landed in Munchkin land with Dorthy and Toto. The sunny warm day had slight breezes that cascaded along the tips of the overgrowth. They rejoiced to breathe in oxygen on what appeared to be Earth. The group strolled through the woods jubilant and carefree trying to make they’re way to the main road. Unaware of tell tale signs of things going awry. As they reminisce over their voyage no one noticed the old busted cart that leaned against a cypress tree, or the wanted poster hanging from that same tree asking for the return of a runaway slave.

It was dusk so while the sun prepared itself for a nightly nap the sounds of crickets serenaded the woodlands. As the excited trio makes it to the main road they hear horse hooves pounding against the ground.

“Hey look at this a horse drawn carriage is approaching. Look at his clothes, we did it” cried a gleeful Anna.

“If we’re not at some ridiculous renaissance fair my guess is mid to late 19th century” Anna presumed.

“Look at the poor chap approaching, I hope we don’t get him in trouble when we ask for a ride into town” said Dr. Otto.

“Hail , hail there! May we trouble you for a ride into the nearest town” the jubilant Dr. Otto asks.

“You can trouble me by showing my your papers, Nigger!” Exclaimed the huge black man sitting atop of the rig with a straw hanging out the left side of his mouth and leather gloves that held tightly to the reins of the horses.

“Papers, now or I’m a haul y’all in faster than a dog can piss on a tree” barked the aggressive giant.

“P-papers we d-don’t have any bloody papers.” studdard a frustrated Dr. Mabis.

“Then you have a bigger problem than talking boy.” the giant proclaimed.

“Now see here” and as Dr. Otto tried to assert authority but before another word left his mouth the man slammed his large boot into his face. People often say you see stars when you take a hit that you weren't expecting, but it's more like a quick flash of pure light that begins to fade until it reaches total darkness, and then...

“What owwww, where are we?” the confused and hurt doctor asks.

“After he hit you, he locked us all in the back of this forsakened wagon and left us in here while he went into that building over there.” claimed Dr. Mabis

“This doesn't make any sense” cried Anna.

“I’m scared” she nervously whispered.

And suddenly the doors of the wagon flew open and two men demanded the group to come out of the wagon. They were told to only speak when spoken to or face the penalty. They were told to keep their eyes lowered or there will be a penalty, and if they try to run the penalty for that is death. So as the good doctors and Ms. Anna are

escorted inside the lanterned lit room; they are presented to a distinguished looking gentleman with a large book that he was writing in and without a glance upward he started his line of questions.

“Name?” The man asked.

“Dr. Evan Mabis” he responded.

The well dressed man chuckled as he raised his shoe horned hairline head and took off his glasses from his sun baked flesh for a good cleaning as he placed his glasses back on his face. He turned to the guard.

“Is this the nigger than Sam Morely kicked in the face,” asked the distinguished man.

“No, sir he kicked that other fella over there,” said the guard.

“Now that is enough of the N-word I will not tolerate its use.” proclaimed Dr. Mabis.

The guard on his left hand side responded.

“Now that’s a penalty.”

And he swung the butt of his long rifle into the side of Dr. Mabis jaw.

“I see now these niggers are disobedient after we finish cataloging flog them and brand her,” the esteemed book worm cried.

Anna stood physically shaking as she listened to the man change her name from Anna to Naomi and gave her a value of \$400, The doctors were stripped of their prestigious titles and renamed as well, Dr. Otto was now Malcom and Dr. Mabis was called Malik, and were priced at \$500 a piece.

As Naomi, formerly known as Anna tried to counsel herself by uttering the words

“This doesn't make sense,” she began to understand that penalties do not only apply to men.

As the guard closest to her drew his hand back, he smacked the hearing out of her lilly-white face. A huge purple bruise blossomed and a bloodshot black eye sprung forth with a river of tears streaming from her blue eyes, to her chin, to free falling to the ground.

“That’s a penalty nigger,” said the guard.

Dr. Otto, now known as Malcom, thrust towards the guard to get beaten into the ground.

“Punish them now,” the exhausted book worm orders

Malcom, Malik and Naomi are bum rushed down to the basement of the building where there were cells of others. Ragged clothes, bare footed, some battered and bruised with ripped flesh, swollen eyes and lips, some so scared they hid themselves in the corner of their cells. The negro had alot of differences that were not like the original man. Some had blonde hair, some were red, some had green eyes, some had blue, but the one common denominator that the negro had was their pale white skin. A dead giveaway whether day or night of an original man or a slave.

Naomi was thrust into a chair while Malcom and Malik were led to two large posts protruding out of the floor. Their hands tied to prevent them from moving too far. Shirts cut opened from the back and ripped away to expose the nakedness of their backs.

“Respect! Without that we are like the animals,” a hefty new guard with the lame foot verbalized.

He unraveled a long leather bull whip and flicked it with his wrist from side to side, cutting through the air with a whirring sound effect attached.

“Ahh nigger, I don’t know what you did to have them send you to me but hell has come to pay you a visit,”

And with a thunderous crack Malik’s meat was unzipped from his shoulder to his ribs. His scream could rival the sounds of a jet engine right before take off. Malcom could do nothing as his friend screamed out in agony as a second lashing was laid across him, so he turned his head away horrified for what was happening to his long time pal and terrified knowing that he was next.

“Don’t worry nigger, I puts my welps in a nice grouping so they can be hidden at auction but it looks like a painting,” the lame footed punisher cried.

And with a spin and a flick he paints another stroke across Malik’s back collapsing him to what he wants to be his knees but he’s still held in place by his restraints.

“Yes, nigger I am what you call an abstract artist, my medium is this whip my canvas is your back and my work is born through your screams, hahh!” the man yells

The lash crosses with a previous cut and exposes tendons as blood flowed from his wounds like red wine through a press. With that hit Malik was unconscious and wasn’t

even awoke for the final blow. The two guards who brought him down uncuffed him and dragged him into a cell.

“And no you,” the punisher snarled

“Please sir, I beg of you don’t do this,” Malcom cried.

“Didn’t anybody tell this nigger the rules,” the punisher asks.

“We told him,” the guard replied.

“I guess he dummy over here needs a little extra to help him remember,” said the punisher.

With a spin and a flick Malcom’s flesh had also become unzipped. He let out a great scream, the kind that would make a normal man uncomfortable, disturbed, uneasy, but not these men nor in these times. With every blood curdling scream the punisher and the guards found humor and delight as if each terrible screech was in competition with the last.

After the savagery of the whippings the punishers gaze fixed on Naomi. Too scared to say anything because of fear of a penalty all she could do was shake her head no in protest. The punisher begins to put on a padded welder like gloves and walk over to a large coal fire where he had several branding irons resting. He picks up one with the letter ‘R’ in the middle of a circle He approaches the young battered woman with the glowing rod as she was shackled to the chair, and suddenly grabs her by her flowing mane with one hand looks her deep into her eyes and say

“Let me dry your tears for you girl.”

And shoves the red hot iron on the side of her face. Her shriek was loud enough to shatter glass. The job was done and the punisher had successfully quieted the

newcomers by enforcing the rules of the land he left the basement with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

No one speaks, just soft whimpers and terrified tears. Thoughts of 'how can this be' are not even pondered when the sting of pain's venom marches its course through each of their individual bodies. The moon has finished the night shift and gives way to the sun. As all the caucasian negroes slept on the bottom of their cages huddled on the floor for warmth from the cool breezes that came through an open window in the back of the prison. And as the last embers of the open fire where the branding irons lay die out. You can hear the opening of a door and the sounds of footsteps colliding with the hardwood floors above. Inaudible chattering between two or more individuals took place right before the basement door parted and sunlight darted down the stairs.

"Rise and shine niggers," a man bellows as he slowly planted each foot upon the squeaky staircase.

"Today's yall big day, now don't go up there and make me look bad. Straighten up, brush yourselves off and do your best," the burly sweaty man said.

As he opened the cells on each side of the basement pausing here and there to wipe the beads of perspiration from his round brown face, his task was to get the prisoners from the basement to the square and escort them onto the auction block. During this time no one spoke but Malcom, Malik, and Naomi's eyes absorbed the theatre of their surroundings. Everything they saw reflected the time period of 18th century America south, from the clothing to the store fronts, horses and wagons, but the faces were all wrong. On the outside of the wagon were faces of Africans, braids and Afros, dark skins and lighter. Even the children playing with sticks and hoops in the street had non-white

features. The only ones that look like Malik, Malcolm and Naomi were the arien
bloodline shackled to them inside the wagon. The stoppage of the wagon meant that
they had arrived at their appointed destination. Scores of white folks from infants to the
elderly bound, and destitute. While the windows to their souls lament the essence of
despair. Their feet moved forward in the hopes of humanity. The slaves weresnaked
from the back of the building towards the front where they appeared on the auction
block stage right.

“C’mon folks can I get 300 for this sturdy old chap,” the auctioneer pleaded.

The black crowd shook their heads and begrudgingly remarked about the older
man.

“I like my crackers fresh, that’s just a pile of crumbs you trying to sell,” screamed
a man out of the crowd.

“I hope that ain’t the only niggers you got,” a woman remarked cooling herself
with a fancy silk fan.

“No ma’am just need to get something for this experienced hand,” the auctioneer
pleads.

“I’ll give you \$200 for that underwear washer up there,” as the man from the
crowd lets out an eruption from his rear end that could be heard by the entire
market.

“As you can see I’m a keep him real busy for that \$200,” the man states.

The auctioneer had no other choice but to accept the man’s bid.

One after the other someone was sold and bought by someone else, and then
Malcom steps to the middle of the stage with Naomi and Malik next in line. His bid

started at \$400 and swiftly went to \$500 and that's when he showed up. Large in height and in stature, a man who literally cast a shadow upon mortal men. Eugene Williams, E.W. for short E dub to make it shorter. His bald head contrasting with his dark eyebrows and well groomed beard and mustache, his husky Brutus persona made him quite the ladies man amongst the women and a feared adversary amongst the men. The crowd parted to make way for him to come forth and get a better look at the merchandise. His thousand yard stare penetrating through Malcom's body, firmly gripping his heart and removing it from its place of prominence. The shrunken man hurt from injury, confusion and perhaps a concussion concentrated on looking at the ground in front of the man.

"I'll take the next five," E.W. boasted.

"But we haven't bided on anybody else yet," the auctioneer cautiously remarks.

"\$500 a piece for your next five and I'm sure everybody else is good with that, right," E.W. demands.

The crowd agrees and E.W. smirks with self aware glee.

"Pay the man," E.W. bellows.

A spinly nervous man named Mr. Edwards came forth with a black briefcase which he carried that contained records and documents of E.W.'s. affairs. Mr. Edwards was his longtime accountant that helped control and manage his spending. Even though Mr. Edwards was one of the only people in the world that E.W. would listen to Mr. Edwards wouldn't dare over-step in his approach to volatile E dub.

"Here is a pre-written check for \$2500," Mr. Edwards proclaimed.

"You know this ain't how this works he can't come down here and under bid the market like this he's cheatin' the system," the auctioneer aggressively whispered to Mr. Edwards.

"No, he's actually speeding up the process and buying slaves at more than fair market value," Mr. Edwards interjected.

"How you figure that," asked the auctioneer.

"The next up is a burnt white woman, after that a fat pear, after that a toothpick.

The only two worth \$500 were the first and the last niggers he bought, the rest of that money, well you can put that on your system," the sharp Mr. Edwards replied.

As E.W. and Mr. Edwards climb into their gilded chariot with the paperwork of their newly acquired slaves. The job of bringing them from the marketplace to the plantation fell upon Bishop the overseer of the Williams plantation. Who was a large blackman with a chiseled looking Sunni beard but slightly smaller than E.W.; however, his vicious nature made him a person that was cut from the same cloth as his boss. The other was head house nigger, and slave driver Tyriq a tall slender man with red hair and haunting green eyes that casted a spell like truth serum when he gazed upon other slaves and coerced the answers he sought

As Bishop rode along one side of the slaves Tyriq walked unbounded on the other side barking orders at the chained group to keep pace. The plantation miles away from the market place was a difficult walk with free range of motion, but even more difficult when you're shackled to a group. The portly Malik stumbled then fell to the ground dragging the entire line with him.

“Get up,” Tyriq yells.

“OK,” Malik responds.

“C’mon fat boy,” Tyriq says as he kicks Malik in his rear end, which makes him fall again.

That’s when for the first time someone notices the shoes on the newcomers, and jealousy overcomes Tyriq.

“Well look at this boss,” Tyriq said to Bishop.

“Maybe they can’t walk so good because of these fancy shoes they got on,” says Tyriq.

“I ain’t never seen shoes like that before, where you niggers steal shoes like that from,” ask Bishop.

Malik fixed his mouth for a response but before he could Malcom spoke.

“I don’t know who’s boss, we found ‘em in the woods before we were caught,” he said.

“Found ‘em huh, well you can find ‘em off your feet and toss ‘em up here,” Bishop said.

The trio untied their shoes and did what they were told.

“These must be some up north niggers, fancy shoes and socks, but these niggers want to runaway” Tyriq says as he shakes his head.

“Give me them socks, they’s mine now,” he tells them as he collects up his new bounty.

After the unexpected intermission the long grueling trek continues.

Chapter 3 The Williams Plantation

The Williams plantation 4,500 acres in size surrounded on both sides with dense woodland, and a nearby shallow river. When the convoy turned off the main road onto the fairway towards the big house they passed a large rice field errogatted by the nearby river, and tucked away on the right side of the road, and on the left were lodgings for the slave drivers. A group of men, brothers actually that looked to be products of incest. The Millers, like Bishop, were low class failed farmers, now living and working on the Williams plantation. The Millers however, were at such a low degree that their ebony skin was the only thing that classed them over niggers. Julian the elder boy with his slack jaw and patchy unconnected beard. Elijah the second born had sad eyes that look like they were spaced too far apart. Lamar the third boy was short with a large belly and no front teeth, and Darryl the youngest had a face that was frozen in time. His features were more child-like than adult but his height and weight matched his real age. With that being said Darryl is often called Baby. They all watched the new arrivals as they passed by their little plot of land on the estate.

After a while the lineup passed by the first slaves of the property working in the cotton fields on the right side of the road where the rice fields ended. They were being supervised by the same Millers who lived in the lodging area close to the main road. They're cruelty in the field was to be a deterrent to slaves trying to escape, because to leave the property you would have to get pass them, and the hounds who've been trained to know and have a distane for nigger flesh. The cotton fields were where some

of the strongest and or displeasing slaves worked at. The shade of the individual didn't matter, but one could not help but notice that the paler ones worked the fields. This was the practice of many slave owners to darken their slaves or 'putting them back into the oven so they can finish cooking'. Most not all that worked in the big house were tanned but most still couldn't pass as black with eye color, texture and or color of hair were giveaways to identity. After that on the right side of the road grew potatoes, pumpkins, peas, and barley. and on the left leading up to the big house lies a pasture for cattle, and goat grazing, which leads right to the last large field before the big house where the corn grows on the land. White men, women and children with their long matted hair and thick callused feet groomed all these parts to produce a profit for E.W. and his family.

As the journey reached the large mansion it was surrounded by a modest house where Overseer Bishop lived. Then a few barns, which flanked the left side of the big house and cut off access to the woods. Flanking the right side was a huge garden and directly after that is Tyriq's Cabin larger than the rest of the cabins that made up the grounds of the slave quarters and positioned with clear sights to see any movement towards the surrounding woods. The rest of the cabins were small grouped homes that housed the rest of the plantation slaves.

Our near death group has stopped moving for the first time in a long time. Sweaty, tired, out of breath they are all gasping for air trying to stay upright. That's when a fancy dressed nigger opened the enormous double doors of the big house and out stepped the man of the castle. In his surroundings, his home, his kingdom he appeared even bigger than before. He approached the front of the porch with a regal presence and superior attitude.

“What do you think Bishop,” E.W. asked.

“These look like good replacements for the ones we lost,” Bishop answered.

“I’m going to say this once new niggers, do what your told, and live a fair life here if not you will die like a dirty dog that I don’t want no more you hear,” said E.W.

They all shook their heads in agreement and were led away by Tyriq towards the slave cabins.

“You five are in this cabin, I guess y’all a family now,” Tyriq says with a clownish grin on his face.

The structure which because of the owner of the property, was more elaborate than other slave quarters in the region, it had a porch that they stepped onto before pushing open a door. The entire place was built from brick which was a strong material to keep out bad weather and due to tree line placement also kept the housing fairly cool in the summer and insulated for the winter months. There were wooden floors and a fireplace, opposite of that close to one of two windows in the cabin was an old rickety table with a few raggedy chairs, a few blankets covering bushels of hay as makeshift beds for its occupants and that was it. Naomi fell straight to the floor after walking in sobbing uncontrollably, soon Malik was doing the same thing, followed by Malcom. All three huddled at the front of the cabin trying to cry their pain away. The other two slaves purchased with them continued on with their new surroundings and got comfortable knowing tomorrow will be a work day.

The older thin white male looked upon the former doctors with curiosity.

“Are y’all really from up north like that driver said,” asked the thin man.

“My name is Moses What’s yours, ”the man also asked.

The trio stopped sobbing for the moment to answer the man's question.

“I’m Dr. Otto Lauenburg, this is Dr. Evan Mabis, and professor Anna Parks and we shouldn’t be here,” Malcolm said.

“Doctors huh! Maybe back in England but you better get that mumbo jumbo out your head now boy. Yous in America now and in America, yous just another nigga,” The crass Moses replied.

“But,” Malcom said but was stopped by Malik grabbing hold of his arm.

“Don’t you see,” He whispers.

“We did go back in time but not our own. We’re in some alternate reality, where the history we know has been reversed. We have to be smart about this and survive until we can find away back to the Bell and get out of here,” Malik warned.

“Yes old friend your right,” Malcom agreed.

“So what they call yall for real,” Moses asked.

“I’m Malcom, that’s Malik, and the young lady is Naomi,” replied Malcom.

“Moses is it, How long have you been enslaved,”Malcom queried.

“I was born into it, yeah me and Zeke over there come from the Jackson plantation but when the master died his widow needed money more than she needed us so that’s how we got here,” Moses said.

“Hello Zeke,” said Malcom.

Zeke smiled and gave a half wave as he shyly turned away.

“Don't mind him none he gets skittish around strangers and talking ain't his strong suit,” explained Moses.

“Why's that,” asked Malcom.

“Well one day good old Zeke was working in the field on this really hot day, and the slave driver was pushing him harder and harder trying to make his quota.

Zeke asked for water and the man told him to get back to work, he begged please can I just get a drink the man gave him the back of his hand, so Zeke punched him in the face and started to walk off, until he was tackled dragged into the barn and had his tongue removed to teach him not to talk back,” recounted Moses.

“The screams that came out of that barn were haunting, and then he screamed no more, or ever again,” Moses said with a single tear rolling down his cheek.

“Yeah that was a bad day, but hopefully tomorrow is a better day, y'all better get some rest now, who knows where we're gonna be put on this plantation,” Moses clarified.

The other four occupants weary from travel take a bunk each. The silent Zeke who likes to look up at the night sky immediately took the bunk under the window by the front door. The thin Moses took the bunk adjacent to his that was closest to the fireplace knowing how cold he gets during the winter months, and our three time travelers took the three remaining bunks that aligned in a row in the back of the cabin. As day rolls into night most of the slaves except the ones in the big house have returned to their cabins. The soft glow of candle light speckled the landscape like frozen fireflies locked in place, and in the middle of the slave grounds was a bond fire that many gathered around while

others hung out on their porches. The sounds of harmonicas and other instruments like drumming but on a basin, and foot stomping accompanied by hand clapping was blended with humming and wailing.

“Moses, Moses,” Malcom called.

“What’s going on out there,” he asked.

“That, that’s nothing but niggas unwinding after a long day now go on to sleep you’ll be out there soon enough,” cautioned Moses.

This non celebration was more like motivation to get the people from one point to another. The songs and stories went well into the evening until it started to fade and die out like the frozen firefly candles or the bond fire that turned into smoldering smoke rising into the sky until the sun peeked over the horizon.

With night converting into day the sounds of the rooster awaken the plantation. Shortly after that an old woman kindles a fire close to the spot of the bond fire. This particular spot with its burnt wooden pieces scattered about the small rock encircled space is where the morning cooking took place. After her fire was going strong the older but durable woman placed a large pot on top of the rocks and began to pour water into it from several pots that she had on a pull wagon. She began stirring the water with a long wooden spoon. while the water swirled around in a small cyclone the old woman began to pour in ingredients, like a quarter sack of sugar, a sack and a half of oats. she also had a basket filled with mixed berries which she knew the children loved and was an extra treat for those waking up this morning to get ready for the day. She also had various pieces of bread in another basket, some baked in a pan over her own fireplace.

Some pieces were snuk to her from servants in the big house, who gave them to other slaves who then brought them to her for breakfast-servings.

As the brew thickened the quiet little shanty town started to rise with groups of people coming out of their cabins to eat including the group in cabin two of Malcom, Marcus, Naomi, Moses, and Zeke. A famished Marcus had attention squarely on the pot, while Naomi was stuck in a state of shock just kept her head down and her mouth closed, but Malcom couldn't help but drink in all that encompassed him. White people all around him like a scene from the post apocalyptic movie Mad Max. Many bruised and battered but curiously with no signs of hopelessness. This intrigued Malcolm, so once they all received their portions and returned to cabin two Malcom had to ask why?

"Moses, I don't understand how come the people here who far outnumber their oppressors don't rise up and take over for themselves, Malcom asked".

"Boy are you stupid or dumb," Moses asked.

"Frederick Douglass black friend John Brown tried that and look where that got him," said Mosses.

"I'm sorry John who," asked Malcom.

"John Brown dummy the one who took his sons to Virginia to storm the armory. They took it over but hung for their troubles once the army and militia got there ," declared Moses.

He finished his meal and started out the door followed by Zeke.

"I guess it's time to be enslaved," grunted Marcus as the trio got up from the table.

When they got outside to the porch they were met by Tyriq.

"Good morning sleepyheads I sure do hope you folks enjoyed your rest last night. White girl I hope you know how to clean cause your lucky tail is going to the big house. Old man you're going to take care of the livestock and the rest of y'all are goin' into the fields. Fat man you're on potatoes, and barley and you two biggins' are on cotton," said Tyriq.

Just then the Millers show up to escort the slaves that worked in the field to their designated post.

"You three follow them and you two come with me," commanded Tyriq as he split up the cabin.

Tyriq had a peppy glee in his step knowing he was going up to the big house. Anytime spent around his majestic masters and their gleaming palace was like a slice of heaven bestowed upon him.

"Hurry up girl," Tyriq yelled as they got closer to the large mansion.

"Old nigga the barn is that way, Mr. Bishop will tell you what to do," Tyriq pointed Moses towards the barn as he continued to walk with Naomi to the big house.

"Wipe your feet girl this ain't no slave cabin," he cautioned.

As they walked inside the home it looked more like a museum to Naomi than a house. A marble-floored foyer leading up to two large Greco-styled columns E.W.'s wealth surpassed anyone else in the territory. the marble pattern continued into a welcoming area that led to the classic double staircase with royal blue and gold carpeting that ran up the stairs and covered the entire second floor. Oil paintings with elaborate golden

frames were being dusted by four slave girls. One named Jasmine who had red hair and green eyes was the second reason why Tyriq was so excited this morning.

“Hi, there ms. Jasmine,” spoke Tyriq.

“What you want,” snapped Jasmine.

“To be your husband but I would settle for being your comforter,” replied Tyriq.

“Jesus is my comforter. I don’t need no other,” Jasmine replied.

“Well if you can’t use my help that way maybe you can use a daddy for that boy of yours,” Tyriq asks.

“Go on now Tyriq I have work to do,” the woman gathered her duster and her rags and proceeded to the next painting.

“Hold on now I brought you a gift and everything,” Tyriq explained.

“Look here,” he says as he draws Naomi towards him.

“This here is the new gal we brought in last night. She’s sturdy and smart enough to keep her mouth shut. I reckon she can be a real good replacement in here with y’all to get some of this work done,” said Tyriq.

“Ok, bye Tyriq,” said Jasmine as she grabbed Naomi’s hand and escorted her into the library.

“That Tyriq he’s always just too close you know what I mean,” said Jasmine.

Naomi shook her head in agreement as she walked around the spacious room. The bookcases hoisted up some of the greatest novels ever written and one in particular caught her eye more than others a vibrant red book with a large decorative letter “A” on it.

“The Scarlet Letter,” she muttered.

“What’s that honey,” Jasmine asked as she continued her daily dusting.

“This book,” she giggled in astonishment.

“This is an original copy of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Scarlet Letter*,” she said as she opened up the novel.

“It’s even signed by him,” gasps Naomi in shock of what she was holding.

It only took Jasmine a few quick steps before she snatched the book out of her hands to place it back in its place.

“Girl are you crazy,” said Jasmine!

“What,” the confused Naomi asked?

“I hope you making that stuff up and playing some type of stupid joke girl cause talk like that round here will get us both killed,” warned Jasmine.

“But,” said Naomi.

“Ain’t no buts if you do know keep it to yourself reading ain’t allowed,” scolded Jasmine.

“Who’s reading,” thundered a strong voice from the hall.

The air was sucked out of the room as an ominous cloud of fear settled into the room. EW emerged through the doorway like a savage bull surveying the arena.

Jasmine’s head immediately dropped as she curtsied to show respect to the Lord of the house. A gesture noticed by EW that Naomi didn’t share. The brutish man grunted at the noticeable slight.

“Read, we can’t read sir,” explained Jasmine.

“I know you can’t Jasmine, but I don’t know nothing about her. Leave us,”
E.W. barked.

As Jasmine walked out the room and slowly walked out the door E.W. circled around Naomi, studying her features paying close attention to her because there was something different about her than the other slaves, but what he wondered? If it wasn’t for her runaway mark her skin was flawless what a shame he thought. Her hair wasn’t matted to her head or covered with an old rag. It actually shined when the light hit it like golden strings from an elegant harp. Her shape was even different. For her age one would have expected a child or two to have been birthed by now but she had a figure of a young girl who wasn’t too far from her first blood. A grin began to split E.W.’s gruff exterior when he stopped to gather himself. Feeling like he was bewitched by Naomi E.W.’s anger was kindled.

“Who taught you how to read girl,” E.W. demanded.

“I don’t know how I just like the red book,” said Naomi.

“Don’t lie to me girl I heard her tell you not to read,” said E.W.

“I was pretending that’s all,” a sacred Naomi responded.

“Pretending” E.W. paused. He stopped encircling Naomi standing directly behind her.

“I like to pretend too,” said E.W.

On the other side of the door one by one the girls cleaning up the big house walked away. Some wiping away tears as they try to hold their heads and pretend like they didn’t know what was going on, but the strength needed for the emotional trauma of hearing the same cries and pleas is a taught behavior from

generations of victims. The room suddenly went from ruckus to silence. Moments later E.W. emerged from the library.

“Somebody get this uppity nigger out my library,” bellowed E.W.

An older slave woman waiting outside the room rushed in with a blanket and soft words to console Naomi as she rushed her to an out house behind the big house where she attended to the violated woman, who can only sob into her bosom as she grasps the deep disdain that she had for her new reality.

As Naomi dealt with the horrors of being brutally raped, branded, and slapped, All things she had heard of happening to other women but never thought that something like this could happen to her. Meanwhile, companions Malcom and Malik were learning how difficult field work was.

“You ever picked potatoes boy,” said slave driver Julian Miller.

“No sir,” responded Malik.

“You do know what one look like,” Younger brother Elijah asks Malik.

“Yes sir,” said Malik.

“Good then grab it out the ground put it in your bag when it fills dump it in the cart,” explained Julian.

“Then what,” asked Malik.

“Do it again until we say stop or you drop dead and if you stop and ain’t dead you gonna wish you were,” said Elijah.

“Yes sir,” the frighten Malik said as he dropped to his knees and started uprooting potatoes with a terrified spirit of being punished again.

As far as Malcolm his experience with brothers Lamar and Darryl was less than a tutorial guideline and more of a command for productivity. You see since the cotton gin made cleaning seeds out of cotton faster the demand for the product increased which made it the most profitable assets on any plantation, and sturdy men like Malcom were in high demand to keep the volume of cotton coming out the field and into production.

“Nigger what’s your name,” asked Darryl

“You all prefer to call me Malcom,” he said.

“Hey! nigger. Why do it sound to me like when you open your filthy mouth you’re getting smart with my brother,” asked older brother Lamar.

“No sir, I assure you those are not my intentions,” said Malcom.

“See there you go again talking all fancy like you better than somebody right ‘D’,” proclaimed slave driver Lamar.

“Maybe we got to teach him a lesson,” stated Darryl.

“No, no that won’t be necessary,” begged Malcom, but it was too late the men had already had their minds made up.

The larger baby brother started to circle around Malcom to attack him from behind while the older brother approached him directly. Malcom held out his hands with an open palm gesture to still pleading with the man in front of him to stop, but at the same time Darryl quickly wrapped a rope around his neck and turned so the two men were back to back, and with a great pull he had Malcom suspended off his feet in mid air. Malcom grabbing at the rope which constricted against his windpipe as he defensively became exposed over the large man’s back became ravaged by body shots from slave driver Lamar that took the rest of the wind out of him. After a good 30 second beating Darryl

let Malcom go and Lamar ordered him back to work. Choking and bruised Malcom started picking cotton, but soft hands and thorns do not mix for the cotton plant has built in protection from being picked.

After a hard brutal day the slaves started returning to their cabins. Malcom with a big red ring around his neck, bruised ribs and bloodsoaked fingertips was one of the last out of the field. When he arrived at the cabin Zeke and Moses were out front.

“There’s a bucket of water inside for you to soak your hands in, next time you pick grab only white and go no further than the middle of the cotton let the rest pill itself off as you pull back,” advised Moses.

“Ok thanks,” said Malcom.

“Yeah you should go see about your lady friend,” said Moses.

A puzzled Malcom didn't understand how the conversation switched the way it did but he proceeded passed the men to the door and as he turned the knob and pushed forward the awful sounds of hurt came pouring out of the cabin. Casting off the slave names given by the blackman Dr. Otto eyes started to well up when he saw Dr. Mabis consoling professor Ann as she sobbed terentially as tears flooded down her cheeks and onto Dr. Mabis. Dr. Otto rushed over and asked.

“Ann what happened,” Dr. Otto’s heart was falling to pieces inside of fis chest.

“Otto let me speak to you in private,” Dr. Mabis said.

“No don’t leave me,” cried out Anna as she clinched tighter onto Dr. Mabis.

“He made me do it,” The woman blurted out.

“Who made you do what,” asked Dr, Otto?

“The man, the man that bought us he took it from me,” cried out Anna.

“He took it, you mean he raped you,” asked Dr. Otto?

Anna buried her head deep into Dr. Mabis chest and shook her head yes to confirm Dr. Otto’s assessment. After a while Naomi fell asleep and Malcom and Malik were able to go aside and talk.

“ This is nuts,” claimed Malcom.

“I know, but what do we do,” asked Malik.

“We gotta get out of here that’s for sure,” said Malcom.

“If we find a way back to the Bell maybe we can get back to our own reality and leave this God forsaken place behind,” expressed Malik.

“Well old friend lucky for us I have a built in gps. I know exactly where we are and the proximity of the Bell” boasted Malcom.

“Where, where is it close, can we go now,” asked Malik.

“Calm down we have to do some reconnaissance first and scope out how to leave and when. As far as where throughout our misadventures I mental logged in our coordinates, We essentially went in a giant ‘V’ from the Bell to town and now here I believe the Bell is 20 or so miles west of here,” explained Malcom.

“No we should leave right now,” Malik sharply disputes.

“Don’t be silly man we have to approach this rationally,” said Malcom.

“ Look at her,” Malik points his friend in Naomi’s beaten and deflowered direction.

“We did this, you understand we did this to her. She was happy living her life and we failed her,” Malik walks away in anger and frustration and sits by Naomi’s bed side.

Chapter4:Running Scared

As darkness spread across the land and the nightly serenade of woodland creatures began. The mind that was placed inside Malcom started to illuminate calculations and scenarios of their great escape. Unable to use a computer or calculator, the deduction that he produced dwelled on the back of his brain eager and excited to spring forth into action, like a child with an outstretched arm wishing that teacher called on them for the answer. After heavy pondering throughout the night, brilliance struck Malcom to where he had an escape-route and a plan to restart the Bell and return to their reality. Evening sat and morning rose. Without an ounce of sleep and starting another day in bondage Malcom was auspiciously excited. The first person up for the day along with Malcom was old Moses. He had to share his news of escape. The inspiration was swelling inside of his chest like a balloon on the verge of bursting.

“Good morning,” whispered Malcom.

“Yeah, morning,” replied the dinosauric old man. As he stretched and grunted the sounds of his ligaments could be heard popping and cracking. His every move was a concert of notes coming from his groans to his aching joints. With his eyes half open he could see the gleeful Malcom itching to tell him something.

“What are you so happy about,” asked Moses.

Malcom positioned himself closer to the man so he could get the weight of this information off his chest without disturbing the rest of their cabin mates before the breakfast bell.

“What if I told you we could get away from all of this,” inquired Malcom.

“What ‘ya talkin bout boy,” he replied.

“I’m talking about getting off this God forsaken plantation going somewhere very different from here,” quoted Malcom.

“Don’t talk that runaway mess to me boy, don’t talk it. Do you know what they do to runaways? Have you ever seen a man after they finished abusing him? It ain’t worth it. Here you got a good life. This cabin is better than the dog houses I grew up in where there were ten to fifteen of us crowded in a space no bigger than this using one another for heat in the winter as we slept on the cold dirt floor. You got your own bed, warm blankets and enough room to walk around without stepping on somebody's newborn baby” scolded Moses.

“I hear you, I do but this is different. None of those other folks had me and my intellect. I have a plan that no one has ever had,” boasted Malcom.

Unimpressed the old man flagged his idea with a negative gasp and a wave of dismissal.

“Nigga have you ever heard of Fredick Douglass, or better yet John Brown, yeah and he was black trying to help out niggas talking about to arms and bringing the fight to the enemy. His friend Douglass who was just as white as you or me tried to tell him about those wicked devils, but just like you he wouldn’t listen either. Yeah he won a couple of fights but them burnt crackers won the war, killed him, his men and his sons.” a disgusted Moses explained.

“Burnt crackers, a puzzled Malcom inquired.”

“Yeah dark on the outside stale on the inside,” responded Moses.

“We can’t just sit here and accept this,” asked Malcom.

“Boy, I’m telling you if you run they will catch you,” warned the old man.

Moses rose up and walked out to the porch leaving Malcom to ponder his words. As their conversation died down one by one their cabin mates sprung forth to start the day. In the case of Naomi some sprouted forth more leisurely than others. The frightened young lady began her day with tears streaming down her cheeks like banners of shame. The more she wiped away the more they freely flowed. To hide her face was her only refuge until out the corner of her eye she saw a garment to help dry the overwhelming flood of emotions. Her friend Marcus had awoken to help put the pieces back together.

“I’ve been waiting for you two to wake for the day, I believe I have the answer to our current situation,” claimed Malcom.

“My God man if you have the answer let’s hear it,” Marcus requested.

“With some masterful deductions and my memory of the landscape I triangulated our current position and that of the courthouse and the bell, to know that we only have to go five miles north west of here to find our craft and if we leave by nightfall we would have a little more than this time right now when that mongrel Tyriq shows up and discover us missing. By that time we should have any and all repairs to the Bell completed and shall be sitting in a local Starbucks before anyone can even notice that we have left,” The confident Malcom proposed.

“Ok gang are you in or out,” he asked.

“I’m in,” said Marcus.

A catatonic Naomi Could only shake her head in agreement but the bonds of collaboration were sealed.

“Knock, Knock. I hope I wasn’t disturbing nothing but if you all don’t mind its time for you niggers to get to work,” interjected an antaginozing Tyriq.

Each one filed out of the cabin to begin their daily work, but deeply embedded inside the three were the thoughts of freedom. Slavery is a heavy burden upon the damned souls who had to partake in the digestion of such a bitter drink. The taste of which was even more sour to those who weren’t born unto it but had it forced upon them. Their engraved memories sired into their minds of a past that they took for granted. When being white was not a curse but a privilege. To sip on complicated lattes and draw fury when the measures of their cocktails do not match the standards of his or her ideological entitlement. When hearing the plight of African Americans fell upon deaf ears and now when history could help most to escape the Hell on Earth prison they find themselves encapsulated in, they fail in recalling anything that could save them except the knowledge given unto them that they received in the alternate reality that they came from. The lust of returning was so overwhelming for Malcom, Marcus, and Naomi, that the hard struggles of the day didn’t bother them, as the thoughts of what to do and how to get home lit the minds of each of them like a flame blooming in the darkness. Being enslaved was about to change channels from the ‘Days of our lives’ to ‘Soul Train’ destination of the damned.

That evening the trio returned to the cabin ready to exchange ideas to bring about their freedom. Malcolm suggested they leave in the cover of darkness and head north by northwest to return to the crash site. While Marcus offered a different tactic. He proposed the group left in the middle of the afternoon when you can see where you're going a lot better plus by the time someone figures out that they have left they would be

a considerable distance away. Naomi agreed with both strategies and got the men to settle on dusk when they all come in from working, they could walk along the corn fields and when no one was looking they could slip into the field and meet at the scarecrow with the two feathers in his hat.

“Y’all all right over there, You know it’s impolite to keep secrets,” cautioned Moses.

Marcus tried to stop Malcom from conversing with the man but an all too trustworthy Malcom gleefully walked over to him to softly whisper a couple questions to him.

“How long have you been serving,” Malcolm inquired.

“Since I was a youngin’ why,” asked the suspicious Moses.

“Wouldn’t you like to know what it feels like to be free,” states Malcom.

“If you niggas is thinking what I think your thinking y’all need to get that foolishness out your heads right now ya’ hear. Cause ain’t no way them graham crackers gonna lose money over you. They will hunt you down and bring you back no matter where you go, and once they get you back here, well hell on earth will be a lunch break compared to what they gonna do to you,” with his wild stair and the certainty in his voice you can tell that Moses was speaking from a place of knowledge. He has spent 45 years in servitude, and seen many slaves come and go throughout the years. It seemed to him the ones with the bright ideas are the ones who end up dead, crippled, or sodomized.

“I assure you this plan will work. We will be free but what I’m asking you is will you and your non speaking companion be joining us in this endeavor or not,” the pompous professor proposed.

Moses looked Malcom dead in his eyes and responded with a long drawn out
“Nope”!

The next day rolls in and the performances by each one of the players went flawlessly undetectable. Blending in, instead of sticking out, going along to get along until the stage was ready.

The golden hour of evening set upon them.

Lights!

No one’s watching.

Camera!

Slip away, and... RUN!!!

Action!

From an overhead view carvings begin to be drawn on the green field with stalks making way as they navigate towards their target. Every hard and hot breath, sounding louder than the last. Racing through this field so fast that everything is seen in flashes of corn stalks, the sun, the scarecrow, and the ground. Heartbeat pounding like an alarm trying to give away their position. Thump, Thump! Thump, Thump! might as well have a You Are Here arrow pointed at them. Thump, Thump! Thump, Thump! chest tightening puddles of sweat streaming out of them, mouth-drying. Almost to the scarecrow inhaling and exhaling so fast that it feels like one motion. As their lungs burned from the exhausting run each one of them was thrilled to see the others make it to the checkpoint. Hearts racing from fear, excitement, and plenty of anxiety.

“Is everyone ok,” asked Malcom.

A collective yes was cried out by the two weary slaves.

“What’s next,” asked Marcus.

“Northwest,” claims Malcom.

“We need to keep moving before they realize we are gone,” said the heavy breathing Malcom.

The group proceeded ahead following the left side of the setting sun. Picking up small cuts and scratches from the thick brush that they used as cover as they walked parallel from the main road until...

“Wait, you hear that, it sounds like,” pondered Marcus.

“Horses, We got to hide,” said Naomi.

As the trio crouches down, They get a good look at the wagon passing through, but more importantly the occupants of the vehicle. Upfront was Tyriq and their cabin mate Moses while riding alongside was overseer Bishop.

“Where do you think they’re coming from,” asked Naomi.

“I don’t know nor do I want to stick around to find out,” exclaimed Marcus.

As the sun falls, the moonrise and long shadows streak through the woods. The faint sounds of dogs and men are heard in the distance you can see glowing orbs bouncing in between the trees, as search parties have now been formed to find the missing property. The only good thing is they seem to be walking away from our exhausted travelers who have just arrived at the mouth of the waterway that houses the cave that cradles their craft.

“We don’t have forever. The peppers I stole from the kitchen will only delay the dogs. Sooner or later they will circle around it and find us, so let’s not be here when that happens ok,” proclaimed Naomi!

“Agreed,” said Malcom as he enters into the cloak of darkness provided by the deepness of the cave.

Feeling their way through the thick blackness no one could find the ship until Marcus’s hand rubs against the smooth surface of The Bell.

“Here,” cried out Marcus.

Being an arm’s length away the group linked hands to rally around Marcus’s discovery.

“Yes,” cried out each member of the team as they briefly celebrated with joyous exuberance.

“Let’s go home,” claim Malcom.

Once Malcom locates the door to The Bell the interior lights activate. This is a good sign for the runaways, the craft still had power and look like it was still in good condition.

“Let’s get ready to go home,” said Malcom with a puffed-up presumption of the flight back.

As the craft booted up the start of the engagement was exactly like the first flight, except the craft only made noise and hovered.

“C’mon Malcom let’s get out of here engage man, engage,” The gleefully impatient Marcus requested.

“Somethings wrong let me sit her down and check a few things,” claims Malcom.

“Oh no, I think I know what it is,” said Naomi.

“What,” asked the two men?

“In some of my tests, the mercury burns out relatively quickly and needs to be replaced. There may be some in the cargo hold where I planned to put more, but we left so abruptly I can’t remember if I put it in there or not,” claimed Naomi.

“Well let’s check and see,” said Marcus.

The trio searched the cargo bay, they looked in shelving areas, drawers, and every square inch of the craft to locate the faintest deposit of Mercury to be able to leave. Nothing. And that’s when they heard it, The dogs drawing in closer.

“Ok time to get out of here we’ll come back and try again later,” exclaimed Malcom.

“You niggas are slippery than a birth canal” claimed the man.

As the group slushed through the waters to exit out the cave they came within mere feet of the shore when the first person stepped forth out of the wilderness.

“I found ‘em boys,” yelled the man.

As he pointed his loaded rifle directly at them he grinned with a snarky grin. He then takes a long drag off his tobacco pipe and slowly lets the smoke billow out the side of his mouth and addressed the soggy runaways.

“You niggas are slippery than a fertile virgin,” claimed the man.

“But, all that comes to end right now, y’all in some trouble deeper than that water you in. Now y’all get up here before I lay you out where you stand,” barked the man!

They steadily walk towards land with their hands up as more men descend on the location. The dogs rabidly barked, frothing at the mouth feverishly eager to taste slave

flesh. Marcus was the first out of the water to be greeted with a scker punch to the side of his temple.

“Hey, hey, hey,” screamed Bishop.

“Discipline is my job, not yours cowboy,” He claimed.

“I fell down that stinking cliff chasin’ after these niggers,” the man responded.

“I don’t care. Your job was to find ‘em and they found, put some money on your sore feelings and get over it,” responded Bishop.

“Now niggers follow Tyriq and Moses here back to the plantation where we gonna have us a talk about gratefulness,” the wildly Bishop smirks at his own comments, as he rides up ahead of the posse.

“Shackel ‘em Moses,” said Tyriq throws the iron restraints towards him. He then proceeds to bind Malcom first.

“Why would you do this to us,” the confused Malcom asked. and after both hands were successfully cuffed Moses reaches deep down and come across Malcolm’s face with the back of his hand staggering the man backward while leaving a mouthful of blood spilling over his lips. The posse laughs at the display of violence.

“I warned you nigga, I said not to do this but you wouldn’t listen. I tried to tell you but now I’m looking out for me, you hear me nigga. I’m looking out for me,” Moses screams in Malcom face as he roughly grabs him by the breast of his shirt then pushes the woozy man over. He began to shackle his feet, and as he got him back up he shackled his neck and then the neck of Nomi as well as her hands and feet and finally Marcus’s neck hands, and feet.

“Ok niggas let’s go, They already boss,” Moses tells Tyriq.

With a squad of horses in front of them and Tyriq walking with them pulling the chain connected to their necks, Moses walked behind them holding the other end of the neck chain with a squad of horses following behind him. Its been a long evening but nothing seemed as long as that walk back to the unknown but surely painful journey to the plantation. Chatter amongst them men on horseback started about what the fate of the runaways might be, and with every terrifying story that was overheard and at times directed to the slaves. The more this nightmare grew darker.

Chapter 5: Fear

Shedding darkness as twilight’s gradient glow unfolds over the horizon. The large convoy enters the complex. While most are just waking up to start the day all know about the runaways who escaped yesterday. The sounds of the horses passing the big house and approaching the slave cabins. Heads started popping out to see the spectacle during this time Bishop’s horse gallops into the slave cabin area approaching the slave-catching posse.

“Thank you boys here’s your payment I’ve got from here,” says Bishop.

“Call us anytime,” one of the men responds as the group withdraws from the property.

In the middle of the shantytown was an odd-looking post with rings hanging from the top of them. Peculiar but nothing that really interested the runaways until Tyriq started pulling them towards it. Tyriq then detaches Malcom from his neck collar and hooks his chained wrists up over his head and to the post.

“Wait, wait what’s going on,” asks Malcom.

“If you don’t know you’ll figure it out real soon,” sites Tyriq.

Bishop unmounts his horse and retrieves the coiled bullwhip hanging from the side of his steed.

“Ok you little pink bastard it’s time to learn how to be grateful for the food and shelter provided to you by our most gracious host,” said Bishop.

He unravels the whip while some covered their eyes, others walked away, and a few shed tears prior to the first blow. The squirming man knew a whooping was coming. He thought to himself about the beatings he received as a child to rationalize what was to come, but this was not that. Tyriq rips the shirt off the man exposing his bareback.

“He’s ready,” Tyriq yells to Bishop.

“Well let’s make it special for him,” claimed Bishop.

When he reaches back, Tyriq runs to get out of the way, he stretches forward, and when the tip of the whip gets halfway to its intended target, Bishop yanks back the snake-like leather binding so that as it splits the air with a whirling sound, the teeth of the serpent flares out with a thunderous and echoing crack that sinks the fangs of the beast deep into Malcolm’s tender skeletal muscle of its victim. Painting a bloody red line across its caucasian background. Unlike the beating received at the jail, Bishop was a pro at inflicting maximum pain. The guttural yell released by Malcom was a sound he has never heard or made in his life. Naomi immediately started crying not only for her empathy for him but also for anticipating her own demise. Marcus, however with watering eyes himself looked n stoically to prepare for his turn.

“Whoo weee boy and that was one out of twenty,” bragged Bishop

Crack, Wirl, Crack the background gets painted with two more strokes. Tears and blood flow freely spit flies out of his mouth as he begs for the assault to stop.

“Please, no more” Malcolm cries out!

Bishop stretches while the man pleas go over his head and directly into the hearts of slaves that were onlooking. Who saw themselves in the runaways. Whether it was hair color, eye color, or just basic humanity, empathy was so broad that it encompassed the whole area. and just like that, Whirl, Crack, Whirl, Crack, Whirl, Crack. Three more lashes. This continued until he got all twenty lashes. The heavier Marcus was determined to not beagle to survive twenty lashes received twelve and most disgracefully Naomi was struck twelve times. With the thought that nigger women can take it as much as nigger men. Exhausted, hurt, and bloody each one was escorted to the hotboxes. mini cellars that are positioned on the plantation to be directly under the soon during the noontime hours. To slowly roast the inhabitants inside. The message has been thoroughly delivered to the runaways and any potential runaways in the slave cabins. Time passes at a different speed in the hotbox. You can't sleep the time away, you can't just take your mind off it, when the heat rises the real suffering begins. No breeze or any other way to beat the extreme temperatures. This is not a place for the claustrophobic a tight space filled with sweat anxiety and confusion. After five days of this brutal burial-like torture, they were set free, but not without the final form of punishment. A giant 'R' branded on the faces of the runaways to identify them as so, except Naomi by orders directly from E.W. himself. No, he had different plans for her. He found the young woman different and attractive, but a complete softy on her he was not. The house girl Jasmine was recently caught sneaking extra food out of the kitchen

and had to be punished so E. W. had her only daughter brought up to the big house. The little girl was about four or five was too young to work but will soon work off her mother's debt. She waited on the back porch with Tyriq who assured her mother he'll bring her back in one piece while Moses fetched Naomi.

"Hey, there girl, I hope all that foolishness is up out of you because you are lucky," proclaims Tyriq.

"You will not have to go out in the fields and can keep your job right here in the big house, and all you got to do is this one last thing to prove your loyalty," says Tyriq.

"What's that," she asks?

"You'll see," he replies.

Tyriq, Naomi, and Moses walk up the main thoroughfare but before they get to the main road they cut through the ricefields and walk towards a larger water source. where they run into Bishop and he is holding on to a rope that is attached to a harness that's connected to another rope that's threaded through a long branch around a thick old tree.

"Bring the child over," expresses Bishop.

Tyriq scoops up the little girl and places her in the harness and spreads chicken grease over the baby as well as hang pieces of chicken from her legs.

"You grab the other end of this rope girl," Bishop tells Naomi.

When she does Bishop instructs her to lower the child towards the water. Naomi weeps.

"I am not drowning this child," she tells them.

"Shut up girl ain't nobody tell you to do that," answered Tyriq.

“Just keep lowering her down until I say pull and when I do you yank her up as hard as you can you hear me, as hard and as fast as you can,” warned Bishop.

“Ok,” agreed Naomi.

Moses and Tyriq started troubling the waters by throwing rocks at what looked like a log. When it gets hit it quickly moves its head and flashes its teeth towards where the rock was thrown. This was a huge real-life gator the size of a small dinosaur. That the men were determined to catch. Gators are not common to this area but this particular one has come to these waterways and has already eaten a town drunk, three dogs, and avoided every attempt at capture. The reward for getting this monster had a price tag that was too irresistible for Bishop. With permission from E.W. as long as he brought back all his slaves alive, Bishop tracked the demon here. This is where he came to, to rest, and now it was time for him to die.

“Lower her into the water,” said Bishop as he readied himself and set his sights upon the creature.

Naomi complied and the taste receptors of the reptile activated. There was a meal in the water. He lowers his body into the mirky marsh up to his eyeballs and skeptically made his way to the scent.

“Ok slowly now don’t yank too fast slowly bring her up girl,” whispered Bishop.

Naomi complied, bringing the crying toddler up slowly. The gator sensing his meal was trying to get away started speeding up.

“Here we go,” said Bishop.

The chicken parts from the baby's legs are inches out of the water as the gator closes in.

"A little more girl, bring her up a little more," Says Bishop.

Now the tip of the gator's nose is exposed as well as his eyes.

"Hold it, hold it," he tells Naomi.

The gator leaps.

"Pull," yells Bishop.

With all her might Naomi pulls the rope with the gator's mouth gaped wide open and the baby not fully out of the range of the humungous lizard Bishop shoots him right in the soft underbelly with his shotgun the animal instinctively shuts its mouth trapping the child as he falls backwards into the water, floated to the surface, and then flipped right side up.

"Well go get him," Bishop motioned to Tyriq and Moses.

The two carefully got into the water with the bleeding gator whose eyes were closed shut. As they got closer Moses poked it with a large stick and the floating giant remained motionless; he poked a few more times when Tyriq asked.

"Do you hear that," he wondered?

"What," asked Moses

Tyriq went straight at the creature's mouth and pried open its jaws to find the hysterical child still alive. A sigh of relief fell upon all.

Chapter 6: Acceptance

A great transition in the air has started, with barely tolerable nights hoping and praying for a slight breeze to pass through, to The crisp chill of autumn rolling across

the land. Its harvesting time, the last stretch in a field slave's working schedule before they went into less harsh labors. Many would rather tend to the livestock or do building repairs than to be in the grueling clutches of the unmerciful fields. As the daily work was tended to, Two jet black steeds pulled onto the main thoroughfare escorting a gilded black on gold Baroque carriage with an equal array of the same colors through the interior of the buggy. Experienced hands kept their gazes towards their work knowing what was riding through the plantation.

"Ugghh, those ugly little nigger children are waving at us with their pasty little pink skin like uncooked sausages," claimed Yolanda.

Yolanda Baxter, the daughter of the infamous slave owner and master of the house E.W. Back home from her African honeymoon with her new husband Jamal Baxter. The rich newly wed couple are a merger of two power families in the territory. The Baxters and the Williams families have a seventy-five percent stranglehold of all the goods sold in this area. Anything bought or sold in the state was either from the Williams plantation or the Baxters. Jamal the eldest of five Baxter boys and heir of a massive fortune, fancied the only child of the Williams plantation. As the couple's own plantation was being erected from scratch. They planned on staying with E.W. for the month until construction was completed.

As the horse drawn carriage pulls to the front door a proud E.W. stands out front flanked by Mr. Edwards the accountant and a host of valets and handmaidens to attend to the couples every need. A shrieking Yolanda lets out a cheerful scream.

"Daddy," the young lady yells as she exits the vehicle.

E.W. lets out a hardy laugh as he embraces his daughter.

“How was Egypt,” asked E.W.

“Beautiful, the great Pasha sends his warmest regards,” responded Jamal.

“Daddy his palace was gorgeous and the hospitality was amazing it was a living paradise fit for royalty Mohammed has an all Nubian staff I didn’t see not one nigger till I came back to the U.S. ,” claimed Yolanda.

“Sounds wonderful darling, let’s adjourn to my study where you can regale me with all your adventures,” said E.W. as he escorted the young couple inside.

As beautiful as Yolanda is on the outside she was as equally ugly on the inside towards the poor, the uneducated, and a seething hatred towards white people. All attributes the ambitious Jamal ignored, as his political goals outweighed his wife’s contempt, but an unmarried man has no shot at the governor’s mansion but a connected man with a polished aristocrat on his arm does.

The day passes and the evening erodes into a new day. As the sun finds its way in the sky the sounds of the church bell can be heard throughout the slave camp. It is Sunday morning for the Williams plantation which means a day off for the field slaves and a limited work day for the house slaves. A time for worship and reflection. As the sound of hand clapping and foot stomping thundered through the air. The prayers of the righteous rose to heaven as the holy ghost fell upon seekers of salvation. This was a sanctuary for Marcus and Naomi, but foreign to Malcolm. Since Naomi’s violation by E.W. which continues periodically to this day, Her will to continue on in life has been tied to the church and Marcus has been immersed in the church with her at first as support but now as a means to help with his own trauma. The concept of a God was ludicrous to Malcolm being a man of science but knowing his friend Marcus as he does he was

fascinated with his transformation into what he perceived as the occult. As the singing and the shouting died down, an older slave approached a makeshift podium. This man was never seen in the fields or the big house working. He was slightly overweight and dressed a little better than the slaves in the congregation but less than from the blacks that he served. His glasses with no lenses that he wore made him feel as if he was knowledgeable and worthy of the role he was entrusted in. In a shaky but firm preacher voice he began to speak.

“Friends, and Family, Ha! We are in good shape, Ha! We are, Ha! The richest people on this plantation, Ha! We are blessed by the best are we not? Amen! We do the will of him that made us all, Ha! For he said in the Book of Mark that the First will be last and the last will be first, You know you might feel tired, you might feel betrayed, you might feel abandoned, but your feelings don’t amount up to a hill of beans, Ha! Because your feelings are a sign of that old serpent, the devil, who is your real enemy, not master E.W. No! When you think that way it’s that deep rooted part of every nigger called pride. And Proverbs calls pride an abomination which is a really big word that means he hates this thing which is in us. And how do we get rid of this thing so we can be in line with the creator of Heaven and Earth, which will also make us in line with our master which will make our lives as easy as possible until we meet the Lord in peace? The answer my friend Ha! is to humble yourself, Ha! Psalm says the Lord hears the desires of the humble. So if you want your burden to be light, Ha! If you want to be right, Ha! Then humble yourself and do what you’re told. Since the times of the great Egyptian Empires until now the cradle of civilization has been infused with great

men, The Middle East brought us Jesus and Moses. Timbuktu has brought us the great African library where very smart men Ha! explored the far East and brought back gunpowder and invented the modern weapons that we use today to protect ourselves, Thank God for them brave men, Ah Ha! So I'm asking all of you to give up and give in, Not for master E.W. but for yourselves because if you can't serve him who is here, how can you serve him who is to come," questioned the preacher.

Listening with a certain amount of disgust and bewilderment Malcom wrestled with certain aspects of the sermon. When it was over he looked towards Marcus and Naomi with astonishment.

"How can you all, knowing what you know with the advanced degrees you both possess, listen to that rubbish and find any kind of comforting," asked Malcom?

An irritated Marcus seething with anger quickly turned to his friend, stopping him dead in his tracks.

"Look around, Look! Tell me what you see? A university, a campus filled with inspiring young minds. This is our life now. Your wild experiments and disregard for basic scientific safety has landed us here. Scared, beaten, and barely clinging on to life, and now you want to question our beliefs. Well I believe this is my punishment for following you in this crime against nature you convinced us that this was going to change our lives, and you know what pal you was right I went from Doctor to slave and when I die know one here is going to remember the doctor just some fat slave who tried to make it until tomorrow," barked Marcus as

he switched his focus to Naomi holding her by her waist and forearm to escort her back to the cabin.

Following behind them the somber Malcom followed.

"You're right, I'm sorry. I meant well but things definitely got out of control and I desperately want to fix it," said Malcom.

"That's great in all but there is no fixing this," says Naomi as she rubs her belly.

The bewildered man tries to talk, his mouth moves but only confused barely audible sounds come out. He stopped, closed his eyes and breathed in deeply then asked.

"Are you saying that you are," pausing and lingering on the word ARE?

"Pregnant, yes and I don't know how anyone can fix this" said Naomi.

"What we've endured in the last couple of months will never wash away," exclaimed Naomi.

"I understand, I'm sorry for my comments and this whole mess that my ambitions have caused. I thought I was right, I believed I was right but I have found out the hard way by endangering my friends and through pure pain, how wrong I have been. I hope that you two can find it in your hearts to one day forgive me." A somber Malcom confesses.

After reassurance from Naomi and Malcolm the group goes back to their cabin. Which have been abandoned by old Moses and Zeke since their betrayal. They now split a cabin to themselves and have a much lighter workload as a reward for their help in catching the runaways. As the cabin door closes to the world, so does optimism.

Chapter 7: New Hope

As conformity sets in, our tales heroes and heroine begin to blend in like creatures in the forest. as Thanksgiving approaches E.W. has all his servants spread out across the plantation getting his property decked out and ready to receive guests for his annual Thanksgiving celebration which invited dignitaries, judges, high profiled politicians, and extremely successful businessmen. On this day Malcom, Marcus and a few other slaves accompanied by Tyriq, Moses, and Bishop went into town to procure supplies for the big event. They split up in groups of three. The slaves that went with Bishop was tasked with going to Mr. Johnson's store and retrieve specific decorations laid out on his shopping list prepared by Ms. Yolanda. The group with Moses was tasked with loading up the liquor for the event and God help them, if any came up missing or lossed to a great fall. The slaves that went with Tyriq however, was none other than Malcom, and Marcus whose job was to gather certain spices and other delectibles to make the event one of a kind. As the three walked to the rear of the store they were greeted by other slaves filling orders for their plantation. The class system had a hierarchy even in this situation. The front door was only for black folk and certain paying Indian and Mexican customers. All slaves and anyone whose skin color that's lighter than a brown paper bag had to wait in the back to be served. Those in the back knew that the back porch area was only for slave drivers. Their assistants like Moses or a Zeke could stand around the steps or the front of the staircase. Everyone else had to mill around the back of the yard. With winter's chill in the air everytime the wind ripped through the open air of the yard. A bone chilling shiver went through the spines of those who stood by for instructions. While the slave drivers and their helpers had the benefit of wearing old clothes from the big house or whatever was bought for them as a reward for jobs well

done. Slaves had one set of clothing that they needed to modify for any time of the year. Most were basically barefooted with pieces of cloth wrapped around their feet as protection from the cold and their sleeping blanket as a makeshift coat.

“It's freezing out here,” Malcolm says to Moses as he rocks side to side trying to generate heat.

As the wind sweeps through again like a great hawk swooping down on its prey.

“Sheesk,” squeals an upset Marcus.

“Cold isn't the word for this, more like cruel and unusual punishment,” complained Marcus.

A nearby slave from another plantation chuckles.

“You're laughing but I could have sworn I saw a dog sitting by a fire last time that door opened, and for the first time in my life I was jealous of a canine,” explained Malcom.

The man chuckles again.

“Yeah I saw that and I was jealous too,” the man said.

“How you boys doing my name is Freddy,” the friendly man says as he introduces himself?

“Freezing Freddy, freezing,” said Malcom.

“I wish I could just pour hot water over my head and warm up my body,” states Marcus.

“I wish I could catch that water and run it over some coffee beans,” said Malcom.

“Oh yeah I would kill for a Starbucks right now,” Said Freddy.

“Wait what,” asked Malcom.

“Nothing,” said Freddy.

“No you said Starbucks, He said Starbucks,” argued Marcus.

“No I didn’t, I said starstruck,” expressed Freddy.

“No you didn’t, why’d you say it, why you Starbucks, what’d you know about Starbucks,” asked Marcus?

Malcolm calmed down his friend and turned to Freddy with a calm measured approach.

“Freddy you did, you did say Starbucks is a company that won’t exist for another 150 years from now, how do you know about them,” he asks?

“How do you know what’s going to happen 150 years from now,” Freddy questions Malcom?

“All right niggers break time is over,” belted out Tyriq.

“It time to get to work see ya,” the nervous Freddy glibly says as he feverishly starts to walk away

“Wait,” shouts Marcus.

But as Malcom tries to grab Freddy’s arm to keep him engaged in the conversation the man rips his arm away and moves forward towards the back porch.

“Malcom,” Marcus nudges his partner forward to continue questioning Freddy. As he approaches him at the front of the porch he leans in and whispers.

“Look, you’re obviously from the future like we are, this is not your natural timeline like us, I’m not trying to cause trouble for you, I’m just asking for help to piece things together,” claimed Malcom.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about but if I did I wouldn’t talk about it here,” Freddy harshly whispered back.

“Where then just give me a time or place that we can talk,” demanded Malcom.

“If you can find a way to be on the Abebe plantation on New years day by the sweetgum tree with the swing, you might find answers there now if you’ll excuse me,” Freddy declares as he walks off.

Malcolm looked toward Marcus and both men flash large grins at each other seeing that they are not alone and the possibility of a way back home. The cold didn't seem so bad after this unexpected encounter and the two men couldn't wait to get back and share their news with Naomi. Unfortunately she does not share their enthusiasm.

“We have found a man that is not from here, but from the future like we are. He says he has some information to give us so we can finally make it back home,” a joybalant Marcus professes.

“What,” questions Naomi?

“That’s right my girl the nightmare can be drawing to a conclusion,” a dancing Malcom rejoiced.

“You all need to calm down,” warned Naomi.

“Why, my dear this is extraordinary news,” asked Marcus?

“I know, but we don’t know this man, it sounds like ‘The Moses set up’ all over again” barked Naomi.

“No, no this is not that. This man knew things that a man only from the future can know,” responded Marcus.

“Do you not remember ‘The Box,’ how about the flesh eating whippings in the middle of the square, or this, these markings that we wear on our faces as a constant reminder that unlike you all I can not forget. I need some fresh air”

The angry woman exits the cabin slamming the door behind her, as she steps towards the post of the porch she draws in a breath and as she exhales she breaks down and starts sobbing until she suddenly turns it around and finds her resolve. Naomi wipes away the tears and steadies herself for the life she is thrust into.

The holidays on the plantation are a festive time, for the free and enslaved alike. The Thanksgiving party at the big house was a huge success. With revelers singing and dancing throughout the night and boosting E.W’s reputation in the territory. The slave square glowed with a huge bon fire and the sounds of negro spirituals sung to uplift and inspire the souls of the damned. And with the star shaped crystals of winter snow falling from the sky ‘The big house’ launched into Christmas celebrations, an intimate affair that the immediate family indulges in privately. With Christmas coming and going, in the later days the old clothes from the big house and from the slaves on the property begin to hand down things to each other as clothing was handed down to them. This was the exchange that many waited for all year. The shedding of the old and excitement of the new, or at least new to them. With the days dwindling down to the fateful meetup on New Year’s day Malcom and Marcus agree that the plan used during their first escape

will work for this one, with the only difference is slipping away will have to happen in the cover of night during the merriment of a brand new year, and the coming ordeal happening without Naomi. Through skillfully asked questions to others about the Abebe plantation Malcom and Marcus were able to ascertain exactly where it was located, so the plan was to run towards the scarecrow, meetup, and then head towards the Abebe plantation where they would wait near by the swing on the sweetgum tree until Freddy showed up. Like clockwork the plan fell right into place and the two stayed hidden in the long brush close by where they could monitor the meetup area.

“When do you think Freddy will show up,” asked Marcus?

“Who knows, early mid-morning maybe,” explained Malcom.

As the pair wait they fall asleep huddled up sitting back to back from each other using the blankets from their beds to keep somewhat warm in an outdoor environment they were not designed for. But traditional with mornings whether winter or spring, the songs of birds ushered in a new dawn. With a long stretch Malcom began to rise for the day which led to the awakening of Marcus.

“It is freezing out here, what I wouldn’t do for a fire,” says Marcus.

“Agreed, but first things first old man let's get the information we came for and I'll let you stand closes to the fire,” says Malcom.

“You got a deal,” says Marcus as the two men shook hands upon striking an accord.

“Hey look here come someone now, You think it’s him,” asked Marcus?

“Yes I think so he’s headed straight for the swing,” acknowledge Malcom.

As Freddy sits on the swing looking around the camp. Malcolm and Marcus start signaling him with calls and stone tossings.

“Freddy,” the two men loudly whispered!

“Come sit at the base of the tree and face the brush where you’re coming from,” ordered Freddy.

The men rush to the back of the tree and sit down at its base.

“You guys all right,” asked Freddy?

“Peachy,” responded Marcus.

“I’ve been thinking alot about our last encounter and I got a few things to get off my chest. One you’re right I’m not from here, this place, this wretched time. My name isn’t even Freddy, it’s Albert. Albert Madison, I was a geologist working on the Sphinx when I fell through a hidden shaft as we were illegally digging under his paws. I found myself in a chamber filled with hieroglyphics telling a story about the sundial boat. Anyway as I kept interpreting the story I didn’t notice that I start reciting a cantation that brought forth the sundial boat which pushed me back in time when I emerged out of the chamber, everything was different, captured by men brought back to America and sold into slavery,” explained Freddy.

“So is that the key to getting back going to ‘The Sphinx,’” asked Malcom?

“No, you all are not the only folks from the future I’ve met here, there were at least two other groups of people I’ve met, one here on this plantation and another on the boat ride over. All with different ways we came but none with a way back. There was however one last thing I read before I left the chamber and I wish it

was the first. It was a warning about the trip being one way. That time is like a highway you can ride in one direction but you can't just make a u-turn and head back the other way" stated Freddy.

"I'm sorry I couldn't bring you guys no-better news but this is what I was trying to warn you of at the market," said Freddy.

The countenance of the two men fell until a spark of ingenuity struck Malcom.

"Did the other two tell you how they arrived backwards in time," he asked?

"The conversation on the boat that I had he never really told me the whole story when you're shackled neck to neck and foot to foot for months with the dead, the dying, and the despaired. You lose either memory of those details or you forget to ask as you lay there in the dark in urine and excrement some yours and others from God knows where, but the person I met here though, His story was more phenomena related. He claimed to be a pilot that was part of flight 19, the squadron that got lost in 'Bermuda Triangle'. He says after the weirdness of the triangle was over he found himself crash landing in the ocean and swimming to shore, where he was eventually picked up by slavers charging him as a runaway. Anyway I'm sorry I can't be a help but I do want to be a warning for you . Do not alter the fabric of time again! Once you rip a garment it doesn't ever look the same again no matter what you do, " Freddy draws quiet, then abruptly stands up and leaves.

Thinking about what they just heard the confused pair begin to walk back to the plantation, contemplating a way to still get back. Cold and tired when they finally did reach their cabin, a concerned Naomi was relieved to see them in one piece, but with the news they gave her she became more steadfast in the notion that their life was

forever altered and that going back was a delusion. This debate of should they or shouldn't they goes on and on throughout the next couple of months, and how? Well the answer came through in the same place as all their answers seem to come from, the marketplace.

Breaking from winter into spring the weather was still in that tricky place of being cold during the mornings and the evenings but warm during the afternoon hours. During one of these warm afternoons Tyriq was responsible for a group of slaves which included Malcom. There was a shipment from the middle east coming in filled with fine ancient pottery, furniture, and tapestry for the redecoration of the big house. As the slaves begin to load up the precious cargo. A traveling sandbagger posing as a salesman was in full glory as he led a circus filled atmosphere with his loud attention grabbing white suit with black pinstripes and his large black stovepipe hat that sat high upon his head as a beacon to further attract the crowds he was seeking.

“Ladies and gentlemen, boys, and girls this product is no mere elixir pushed on you to boost some fat cat in New York city. No! This is a scientific phenomena of biblical proportions. Set apart from others to bring you cures for what ails ya,” claimed the man.

He noticed a young wealthy woman in the crowd beginning to yawn from boredom when he sprung into action.

“You young lady, please come up here to the front, for a mere demonstration of the reinvigorating powers of this potion. Many people after working hard going and coming from work need a little extra boost to finish the rigors of daily chores. Witness how the

awesome powers of the contents of this bottle will restore the countenance of this fair young lady,” boasted the salesman.

As the young lady approached with her rabbit fur shawl and fancy hoop skirt with its intricate patterns and designs and flowing ripple train cascading from the back adorned with a matching victorian hat. The flamboyant salesman reaches into his pocket as the young woman makes her way up to the front, and pulls out his gold pocket watch and checks the time, in his distraction the young lady extends her hand to be formally greeted, when the man goes to take hold of her and leans in to give it a friendly kiss with the gold watch still in his palm. A small static shock zips between the two.

“Oh pardon me my dear I guess the heat from my warm heart is jumping out of my body again,” explained the man.

Watching this Malcom knew exactly what was happening. This wasn't a case of a fiery heart, but a natural occurrence between her fur and his gold watch called static electricity, which in theory could be harnessed and magnified to boost the power needed to restart 'The Bell,' but how? How can they get the materials needed to sneak off to 'The Bell' and get it up and ready to go. This is a plan that him, and Marcus will debate back and forth for months, using parts of 'The Bell' to create and amplify the charge that they would need. The timing would be the problem, when would be a good time to implement the plan. Meanwhile, Naomi's duties have decreased in the big house and her presence in the cabin have been greater as her belly expanded larger and larger with the coming arrival of her and her captors offspring growing nearer. To be born into slavery is a bitter pill but with the women in the slave community attending to

her, talking to her and assuring her. Made her feel better about her and her baby's situation. After all, how can anyone not love a new baby?

Chapter 8: The story of Uncle Sam

Tender leaves on trees swaying in the wind, to the aroma of flowers blooming and scenting the air. Extended daylight for the growing season strengthening the planted harvest. Field slaves working hard since the frost of winter has finally snapped. In different circles and in hushed tones it started. From lunch breaks to hanging laundry out to dry, you heard the stories being told. It was on the edges of everyone's lips, 'Uncle Sam'. Who was this mythical or abnormal human being that has captured the imaginations of the plantation. Some say he descended from on high by God, to deliver the white man from the hands of his oppressors. In other circles the stories change to suit the audience. In one version Uncle Sam is really Aunt Samatha but the name is a gender trick to throw their black overlords off the trail of the real defender of the negroes.

What all the stories have in common is that they all tell a tale of a slave who has had enough of the abuse and wickedness of the plantation of its origin. During a punishment this person was endowed with a power not of this Earth, the rise of the legend began slaughtering their way through torturous bigitors, freeing downtrodden slaves along the way, Marching onward and escaping the armies of the response to their butchery through advanced tunneling, safe houses, and evasive transport known as the underground railroad. When the long trail of people detained they found themselves in freedom land up north where the laws of slavery were non-existent. This super being,

this heaven sent, this great white hope was rumored to be coming, with eyes fixed specifically on the Williams plantation. These retelling of these stories filled every nigger on the plantation with hope and expectation, everyone of them except her. Rape and pregnancy had away of sharpening Naomi's skepticism. The bubbly coed has passed away reborn as a survivor. Her instinct wasn't just to keep her safe, but the bond she now shares with her unborn child. After a hard day in the fields Naomi walks up to Marcus to pull him to the side for a chat.

"Hey can I talk to you for a second," asked Naomi as Marcus and Malcom entered the cabin.

"Sure," Marcus responded.

Naomi and Marcus walk out to the porch of the cabin, as she gathers her thoughts Marcus weariness from his day disappears and in comes a concern across his face for Naomi.

"That, that right there," she says.

"What," a chuckling Marcus asks?

"That look you give me, like I'm the only thing in the world that matters. I love that. It makes me feel a sense of normalcy in a non normal situation. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have you, so that's why I had to talk to you about the conversations around here. This thing, this fantasy of this mystical being coming to save us all is nothing more than a bedtime story designed to keep us waiting for a next day and a next day, until we pass away holding on to a delusion," commented Naomi.

First of all, thank you for the compliment, I look at you because you and your baby are invaluable to me. I want to make sure that you all are ok, and that's why I am listening to these stories, because whether Uncle Sam is real or not this world is so similar to ours that the underground railroad is. We can escape this wretched place and go north and start a new life," stated Marcus as he stood closer to Naomi. The young lady rubs her pregnant belly and looks deep into Marcus's eyes.

"What kind of new life," she asks?

"One that we can spend together," says Marcus as he lays hands on her belly and leans in to kiss the lips of the young woman as she swoons in his arms the slave encampment eroded into nothingness and in that moment the only thing in the world was them.

As their lips unlock the bliss of their connection gradients into reality, but in one sharp kick that reality came roaring in with a great wail.

Rushed into the cabin to hurry and get her off her feet a trail of liquid leaves the woman and tracks along the floor. Marcus holds the woman's hand and helps her with breathing exercise while Malcom runs out to locate the midwife. From mid evening on July 3rd to the wee hours of the morning of July 4th Naomi was engaged in the throws of labor. Her condition went from heavy breathing to vein bulging pain, then finally euphoria. Her baby girl was born who took on that exact name. Euphoria because she was the joy after all her pain. cleaned and wrapped the midwife lays the newborn on the bosom of her mother and exits from the cabin. Malcolm pulls Marcus over to the side to converse with his colleague.

“I’m going back tonight to see if it's fully charged and ready to go,” said Malcom.

“The Bell,” asks Marcus.

“Yes it should be fully charged by now and the three of us should be able to get out here,” said Malcom.

“Four,” expressed Marcus.

“Oh, yes yes yes I meant four,” a corrected Malcom says.

“ You go, our precious cargo over there shouldn’t be left alone right now,” said Marcus.

“Ok, yeah. You're quite right with that. You stay and look out for them and I’ll check on our transport.”

The day ushered in with new optimism for both men. One for the start of a new family, no matter how it came to being, and another with visions on escape. At the end of the day Malcom slipped away to go back to ‘The Bell,’ and Marcus went promptly to the cabin to be with Naomi and Euphoria. While all was well inside the cabin the plan outside the cabin didn’t quite meet up to expectation. Although the vehicle had indeed powered up and was functional it lacked one ingredient necessary for the jump in time. The Mercury used was completely spent on the journey there and had to be replaced. A frustrated Malcom went on a rant inside the ship, over this oversight, so close to getting back, but there is another obstacle.

“We need mercury,” Malcolm confessed to Marcus upon his return.

“Mercury, where can we find that in this time period, it's not like we can go online and place an order with Amazon,” exclaimed Marcus.

“I know, but I believe it’s the only thing left keeping us here. We just have to figure out how to get our hands on some and make our way out of here,” says Malcom.

“Keep your eyes out,” says Marcus.

“And your mind open,” quote MalcolM.

Chapter 9: The hurricane

In this world there are times when we receive warnings about things to come and as quickly as a blink of an eye, those things become a part of our reality. Blink that’s a good word for it, let’s use that to describe this phenomenon.

After a long summer season the Harvest is starting. It's late September but this year is an Indian summer bringing those high temperatures into Autumn. Today however, is Sunday morning on the plantation and today the congregation is in for a treat. For today will be the first sermon delivered by the preacher’s young son who he has been grooming to be the new leader of the church, but the grounded young man has always been different from his father. While his father’s agenda was to do the plantations business of keeping the slaves calm with the scriptures told to him by the a black minister he sees once a week in town. These retold stories inspire his son to go with him on his visits and ask many questions. Seeing the interest and love of the Lord pour out of the young man totally impresses the pious pastor. He even gives knowledge of certain chapters and verses to the young man that he never imparted on the father. Armed with deep knowledge the young man was excited to bring the word of God to the people. As he looks out of the empty cabin that is used as a sanctuary he sees the congregants making their way to service, as far away as the big house where after

morning breakfast has been served and the big house had been prepared for the evening meal to be made. Slaves make their way from the back of the house and some can be seen crossing the front on their way to church. The trickling crowd that did cross the front was mindful not to lift their heads and make eye contact with those who were out there at the time. The newlyweds Jamal and Yolanda took in the fresh air and scenery of the large open porch after eating breakfast.

“I guess it's time for church, all the little mice are scurrying out. Good riddens,” says Yolanda.

Jamal chuckles as he smokes on his after meal pipe.

“Funny, you say that, because mice are plentiful, and at the gentlemen's club we had this spirited debate about niggers actually voting,” an amused Jamal explains.

“Why on earth would you do that,” asked Yolanda?

“Well the theory is that white people are so easily manipulated that if you give them the right to vote, you can then manipulate that vote to dominate the elections,” revealed Jamal.

“So wickedly diabolical, sounds like the perfect power grab, but that pendulum can swing both ways,” states Yolanda.

“I know, I told them that if we give away power like that then we would be slowly giving away power until we become the minorities in this country,” said Jamal.

“I couldn't imagine such madness. This is the land of the free, the home of the brave not the landscape for snow monkeys,” said Yolanda.

“Agreed,” co-signs Jamal.

“Looks like rain,” observes Jamal.

“Ugggh, I hate it when it rains around here. White people stink in the rain, smell like wet dogs. I truly hope it doesn't rain today,” says Yolanda.

As the last few stragglers left the big house, the clapping and stomping from the cabin was thunderous. Encouraging those outside to find a place inside or hang around the porch to be able to hear and participate in what seems to be the holy ghost falling down on this place of worship. Some broke out in tongues, others burst out in jubilation with random words of cheer. The young man silently prays, takes a deep breath, and approaches the makeshift podium.

“Greetings brothers and Sisters, you all know me since I was a little boy running around this same church, and now thanks to my earthly and heavenly father I stand before you all today. I'm not here to give you a word of my own, but the word according to God. There once was a man by the name of Noah. A holy and good man who knew God well and God knew him. He knew him so well that he gave this man advanced warning about things to come and gave him a chance to help warn others before the trouble started,” retells the young man.

Blink.

Large flocks of birds are seen in the sky making their way west across the land.

Blink.

“Noah warned his friends and neighbors for years and years but nobody wanted to listen, even when he started building a giant boat to save those in his own household the people he warned still wouldn't listen,” the young man expressed.

Blink.

Quiet falls on the land. Not a chirp, a cricket, or any of the usual sounds could be heard except for the restless animals kept by the plantation. Those animals were skeptically looked at as just being ornery that day.

Blink.

“But when the winds came and the rain started, it went on and on and didn’t want to stop. Panic among the people started to set in.” The young man leaned into the words and expressions with his hands to emphasize the terrible scene that was taking place.

Blink.

Winds pick up during the night. Shutters slam against window frames as the rain pelts the earth in sheets. It was starting to become clear that this was going to be a bad storm. Bishop gathers the Miller brothers to help secure certain areas of the big house. Sand bagging the perimeter closing and locking shutters, while in the slave cabins leaky rooves had water pouring in as if a spigot on the ceiling was turned on.

Blink.

“Like the story of the last days, when God comes for the church, one. two will be in the field One will be taken the other will be left behind,” states the young man.

Blink.

Screams can be heard in between surges of wind that were so strong that it snapped trees in half and turned them into missiles that laid assault to every structure on the plantation. With breaches came rushing waters that swept away people and possessions like a great cleansing.

Blink.

“Which of the two are you going to be? One to be left behind to this evil world or one that will do the will of God and go to paradise with him,” asked the young man?

Blink.

Winds calm rain slows to a drizzle, and the wail of the people can still be heard. Some from injuries others in desperate search for loved ones. Frantic is the atmosphere on the plantation in a rare moment in time where race didn't matter, where black rushed to help white and vice versa. When disasters strike politics, and socioeconomic statuses get outweighed by the most basic thread that covers us all, HUMANITY.

Blink.

“You might be tired of the way things are going,” Might, laughs the young man.

“You are tired and rightfully so, but the race ain't for the swift but the reward is for he who runs till the end,” tells the young man to the eager crowd.

Blink.

The eerie stillness in the air led to peculiar sightings like wagon wheels floating through mid air followed by other heavy objects like long tree limbs and large rocks and in that moment while everyone stopped to stare at that unique event, a peek of the moon appeared, and like a starving hawk, shadowy clouds circle overhead and conceals the lunar giant as it it makes its approach towards its prey on the earth. With a great roar it cuts through the air with a deafening shriek, and like that the back half of a wicked

hurricane has gripped the area and begins to devour it as it breakdown structures and swallows them whole within a deluge of water into utter darkness.

Blink.

“Because the promise of the Lord is unto you and your children, So if anyone wants to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Step to alter,” The young man asked?

and with that, I can only say...

Amen.

Chapter 10: Decision

Such a horrible night, but as dawn's early light peels back the veil of darkness there is where the real story resides. Unmeasurable damage across the landscape. Loose animals, smashed windows, scattered belongings everywhere. As E.W. stands stoically assessing the storm's powerful punch to his home, he didn't look upon the disaster and lament, but rather looked upon it as an opportunity to build bigger and better than what was previously standing. Right there with E.W. as usual was Mr. Edwards calculating and planning how to make whatever E.W. wants into a reality.

“I'm thinking of large stone walls encircling the big house to give the appearance of the ancient aqueduct system in Rome to be like a beautiful windbreaker that can absorb all this debris instead of the actual house. I want it to be covered with ivy to blend it in with the rest of the land and adorned at the top of each interval should be a potted plant,” explained E.W.

As E.W. Kept expressing his ideas, Tyriq approaches Mr. Edwards and whispers some news into his ear. The invested E.W.'s focus was unaffected by the men as he continued his visionary styled appraisal.

“And for the rear, a hanging wall garden leading to a massive garden with multiple fountains,” expressed E.W.

“E.W.,” interjected Mr. Edwards.

“Utilizing that space for exquisite gatherings and parties,” E.W. imagines.

“E.W.,” Mr. Edwards sharply broadcast.

“What is it Mr. Edwards, an irritated E.W. lashes out.

“Sorry sir, but it’s Ms. Yolanda. She’s not doing too well this morning,” revealed Mr. Edwards.

“What do you mean, what’s wrong with her,” he asked.

“Fat Patty is in there with her sir and she can’t seem to get her fever to break, nervously uttered Tyriq.

E.W. 's larger than life gaze fell upon Tyriq so heavy that the man’s head immediately dropped, and he averted his eyes to dare not suffer the wrath of the upset giant. He then turns back to Mr. Edwards with a softer countenance.

“Get her out of there and call the doctor, I know she wouldn’t want fat Patty nursing her back to health,” states E.W.

Yolanda bed stricken writhing in pain and wrapped in fever after being one of the victims that was swept away in the storm surge. A rush of water snatched her deep into the

woods where she was found unconscious. Now she babbles incoherently and goes from present and aware to a comatose state. When the carriage sent to fetch the doctor arrives on property Tyriq makes such a scene for clearing a path for him that the stir brings much curiosity of the guest arriving by the slaves.

“Who’s that,” asked Malcolm to a fellow plantation worker.

“Who him, he’s the local doctor. Somebody around here who ain’t a nigger must be really hurt,” the man said.

And then it hit him, during this time period doctors swore that mercury was a cure all when other methods fail. So if his visit is for someone important in the big house then he would most certainly bring mercury with him. He needs a distraction to get inside that medical bag undetected. As one of the loose horses walks around grazing Malcolm picks up a hooked rod and walks alongside the beast. He yells “Stop,” as he smacks the animal on the rear as hard as he could. He ran to keep pace with him and eventually mounted him feigning an attempt to stop the beast as he rode towards the approaching doctor as he started towards the house. He angled the rod to the strap of the medical bag, which knocked down the doctor but securely hooked the bag. With the package secured he slowed the horse just behind the house, just out of sight of prying eyes. Quickly he dismounted and rummaged through the bag knowing he only had seconds before someone would be upon him. There in the corner of the bag was a vial of the liquid metal. He shoved it into his pocket and when he stood instant stars appeared before his eyes and then darkness as Bishop landed a time out punch to Malcolm’s face, which restricted the movement of the man until he regained consciousness late at night inside his cabin.

“Finally you’re awake, I knew your heroics would get you into trouble, after all ‘No good deed goes unpunished’,” the teasing Marcus jokes.

“You’re right old friend but it has also been said that ‘Fortune favors the brave’,” quoted Malcolm as he simultaneously reaches into his pocket and presents the vial of mercury.

Naomi and Marcus marvel as the miracle substance has made its way into their possession. The overwhelming joy was short-lived however, as Naomi looks upon Marcus she gently places her hand on his back and then turns and walks away. A bewildered Malcolm stares at his friend confused by the behavior of the two.

“What’s going on,” asked Malcolm.

“We believe,” started Marcus.

“We,” questioned Malcolm.

“Yes we have fallen in love and decided that what’s best for us and the baby is to go north with Uncle Sam” claimed Marcus.

“But we have a chance to go home, ” Malcolm responded.

“You may have a chance to go back, but we will not endanger the life of this baby in an experimental machine. Who knows where it would shoot us next, or at all. No, no, no I am firm on this one. I love you like a brother, but this will have to be the end of the line for me if you decide to go back” said Marcus.

“I hate that you made this decision but I am happy you found love, brother, ” states Malcolm as he hugs his friend for what seems to be the last time.

"Please tell me you're coming with us, we just got news before you woke, that tonight is the night Uncle Sam is going to come and liberate all those who want to come while everyone is distracted with this hurricane relief, " relayed Marcus.

"If you're asking me will I run with you my answer is yes, but if you're asking if I will journey up north with you my answer unfortunately is no. I don't belong here. I respect your stance, both of you I truly understand, but I can't make that same choice for myself, said Malcolm.

The two embrace again and as tears well up in Marcus's eyes he grabs his friend's face in his hands to gaze upon him and places a kiss on his forehead and hugs him again as the two break down and cry over their inevitable split. As they all gather themselves together after such an emotional showering of affection, love, and admiration the mission at hand had to be completed.

"Ok now time to pack but keep it light shortly someone will knock three times by three times on the back of the cabin. If we are going we need to respond back by knocking three times. We will have five minutes to come out and meet around back, said Marcus.

After a while of sitting around and waiting a wait that seemed to take forever the knock came within the quietness of the cabin which startled them. Three knocks in quick succession, then another set of three quick knocks.

"That's us," claimed Naomi as she clutched her swaddled baby.

All candles were blown out to give the cover of night a chance to shroud them and then one after the other the four of them left the cabin with the same move. Casually walk out look left, look right and then slink off the porch and into the back. A large group of

slaves were gathered back there varying in ages, sexes, and stories the common goal was freedom.

“We go now,” says a man that wasn’t a slave of this plantation.

Matter of fact he wasn’t a slave at all. This whole time the reason Uncle Sam was uncatchable was because the world was looking for a white person committing this crime of theft, and it was not. Uncle Sam was black, born a wealthy aristocrat his compassion for the human condition compelled him to free the cursed souls of the abomination of slavery. The hoard of people migrated away from the plantation to a safe house owned by Uncle Sam, to eat, rest, and gather themselves for the next leg of the long journey. They hid all day long waiting for night to fall to restart their travels, freedom was now a realistic option.

Chapter 11: Fast Forward

The songs of the crickets play in concert with the hooting owl, and the croaking frog.

“It’s time everybody, ” asserts Sam.

“My friends, this is goodbye,” says Malcolm.

They all come together for a group hug.

“Take care of yourself,” Marcus tells Malcolm.

“I will and you all take care of each other. You’re a beautiful family that deserves happiness.

And with that Malcolm turned from the group and went his own way. Heading towards ‘The Bell’ and back to his reality. With down trees and random debris still littering the wayside Malcom uses his mental GPS system to navigate a path to the time machine. With a long arduous hike ending at the mouth of the watering hole that concealed ‘The

Bell' He heard them. The men and their barking dogs. He wades in the water to mask his scent.

“The past time niggers ran we found them right around here,” expressed one of the slave trackers.

Malcolm slinked deeper into the water until only the top of his head was exposed. Once the dogs come over the ridge Malcolm places shrubbery in front of his face to avoid detection. The bloodhounds sniff up to the water's edge and scramble to pick up a scent from there. The men begin to poke around the waters for a while before they decide to continue their search elsewhere. When still and silence befalls the area Malcolm emerges and starts his work on 'The Bell'.

With so many slaves missing a massive effort was launched to find them unwittingly known to the runaways. While a search party was coming up from behind them an even larger militia group was marching directly towards them. They hear the marching militia and hide, stuck in a place with little to no cover as they are miles away from the next safe house. It's a scary intense moment as the armed warriors not only don't see the barely hidden group they are seemingly going to pass right by them without incident. Until one soldier steps out of line to urinate. He was so close to the runaways that the smell of his stream waffled through the nostrils of everyone in hiding. So still, so quiet that breaths and heartbeats seemed to stop. The only movement was tears that started down one young lady's face as the man shook the last droplets free from his manhood. He still gave no notice to the crouching escapees. Tucking himself away he turns and rejoins his ranks. The light from the lanterns and torches the militia carried started dimming and eventually faded away as they went off into the distance.

A great sigh of relief as expelled upon the group. This was a close call, Sam organized everyone to prepare to move out again. They get back to walking to the next safe house and their ultimate goal of making it up north. Although it would be such a great story to tell of a heroic effort against all odds of how a ragtag team came together in the name of truth, justice, and the American way, to make it up north and live out their lives in peace and harmony, this is not that story. The glowing lights returned, illuminating the back sides of the runaways. Exposed now terrified screams rang out as they all scattered to flee from the on coming dangers. Some ran straight ahead others to the left or the right but the now combined efforts from the search party and the militia was able to overwhelm the group and wrangle them all in.

The top ranking officer of the militia walks around the group each slave sobbing with heads drawn to the ground knowing severe punishment will follow. Everyone except one, standing out among the group like the only black key on a grand piano, with a bold and unwavering look was Uncle Sam.

“Now tell me why would a self respecting black man such as yourself be slithering around in the dark with a a pack of niggers,” asked the officer?

“I am here to correct a great injustice. To stand in the gaps for the innocent, and to show the path to righteousness,” claim Sam.

As the officer and his men laughed at the speech, Sam’s resolve had not changed.

“What’s your name son,” asked the officer?

“Maximilian Hargreaves, but you might know me best as Uncle Sam the breaker of chains, the fighter of freedom, an the,” and before Sam could finish the officer

pulls his side arm and paints the nearest slave face with the blood of the abolitionist.

Horried the slaves were on notice now that death will come swift and easy for this group. Naomi's world seemed to evolve into a slow motion effect. Her baby, her new love, herself. Her reflection threw her into another place. There will be no rest, or return. She began to realize that there is only one way to escape. Drawing a sharpened blade stowed away just in case she turned to Marcus and looked deeply into his eyes.

“I really wanted what we were going to build, so if not in this life, I yearn to have it in the next,” she says with a face full of tears as she plunges the blade into his belly, turns it and then comes across his abdomen ensuring death. As the man drops, the onlooking men are stunned. Then she takes the blade and runs it across the throat of her baby before a fatal shot comes from behind her from a soldier who had seen enough.

Now gone, but not forgotten Malcolm completed the necessary repairs on ‘The Bell’ and installed the much needed mercury.

He steady himself to turn on the machine dedicating this attempt to the friends he will be leaving behind. With that ‘The Bell’ came alive. Rejoicing there was one last thing to do as he set the coordinates for the future.

“I am not Malcolm, my name is Dr. Otto Lauenburg,” the good doctor proclaims as he punches his way out the tunnel, up in the air, and through the atmosphere.

Traveling at great speeds through space and time Dr. Otto feels a sense of relief for the briefest of moments until alarms started ringing out and the cabin of the shuttle started

violently throwing him around. It only took the smallest of rips to start the depressurization of the cabin and with that poured in the radiation. Distorting everything, shapes became skewed colors randomly became transparent, and Dr. Otto himself started to change. His skin color went from caucasian to battle grey like the instrument of the panel in front of him. His finger length grew and as the speeding ship fell back to Earth the inertia of the event swelled his head and spread his pupils. Zooming towards Earth and penetrating the atmosphere over the United States. Radar has picked up the object and the military has been dispatched to a potential landing spot. Dr. Otto barely holding on to life reaches out to the accelerator and slows the craft enough that when it made its final approach it glide across the land instead of crashing into it, and with that abrupt stop and the radiation covering his whole body it squashed the doctors stature, making all that happened to him transform him into an unrecognizable state.

Dec. 5th, 1965 Kecksburg, Pa. Dr. Otto is semi conscious and still strapped into his seat. As he slips in and out of consciousness he sees men in hazmat suits pulling him out. He recalls as he exits 'The Bell' men vomiting on the side of the craft. The area was swarming with a heavy military presence, but the last thing he could remember before completely blacking out was the look of disgust on one of the faces of the soldiers. As his vision narrowed and right before his eyelids rolled shut, he got an unfamiliar glimpse of something in the reflection of the hazmat suit's transparent face shield. And with one quick gasp he then blacked out.

Top brass from different branches of the military was summoned. As they all arrived at the secured location, much of the subject matter was kept close to the vest. As the wide dimly lit room started to fill, a single man stepped forward. His attire was different from

the uniformed soldiers in attendance. Dressed in a dark suit and tie, his thick framed glasses, also black was the only sign of imperfection in the man. His stature, not a uniform, medal, or special office commanded attention. His eyes surveyed the room before he spoke, as to look for those who didn't belong, and when no such person was found he spoke with the voice of a sledgehammer going through concrete, surely and rough.

“Around 16:43 a fireball was reported in the skies from Ontario to New York state. You all are not here for the fireball. No you all are here for what the fireball brought with it. This is officially a tier 5 investigation, for Q access authorization only. This Special Access Program is an SAP given to you that is way above your pay grades but very necessary. This Sensitive Compartmented Information must stay this way under penalty of death. After tonight you will most likely never see me again but If anyone here violates this SCI, my face will be the last thing you will see, EVER ” the seriously stern man warned!

Murmurs ran the gamut of the room, questions formed, but before any objections or queries came forth men with folders approached the members of the audience and presented the binders to them. At the same time the dim lights went even dimmer and a projector screen was lowered, and from the back of the room a spectrum of light bolted towards the screen to configure the images of the fiery impact.

“Gentlemen, in your briefings are the details of this incident. Notice that the object is still intact and not broken into pieces like a meteor. If you look even closer you can really make out that this isn't natural at all. It's actually a vessel,

look at the side of the craft you can make out certain hieroglyphics” the mysterious man pointed out, but his observation of hieroglyphics was literally a stretch as the crafts scratches and scrapes during its two rough landings were warped in re-entry.

“This interstellar vehicle must be reverse engineered for the purpose of national security,” urged the speaker.

“Who designed it, I bet it was the Russians,” claimed a general in attendance.

“No, not Russian,” claimed the dark agent.

“How can you be so sure, they would use hieroglyphics to throw us off their trail,” questioned the general.

With the next slide a horribly disfigured Dr. Otto appeared on the screen, unrecognizable as even human anymore. The strange properties of time travel and solar radiation had warped the good doctor into a stereotypical grey alien.

“This is the reason why I know Russians had nothing to do with this vessel,” the unidentified man continued.

“This being that we have retrieved is still alive and will be your other assignment, extracting the knowledge of the cosmos from this subject,” proclaimed the chief speaker.

The company of men were then dismissed to complete their impossible work, but the shockwaves of the event was staggering to say the least, but also the kind of work that only the men in attendance could do.

Chapter 12: The Warning

As blurry lights flicker Dr. Otto groans with a sound he has never heard before. His fluttering eyes begin to focus but he is unable to move any parts of his body. He can roll his eyes back and forth to assess the room. Soldiers everywhere with guns drawn towards him.

“Am I in trouble,” Dr. Otto asks?

“You can speak our language,” a man in a clean suit asks?

“Uh, yeah I can speak english,” responded Dr. Otto.

“Good, that will make communication a lot easier,” the man said.

“Now that that’s established can you let me up, and what have you done to my voice,” Dr. Otto frustratedly inquired.

“This is not your regular voice, let me see,” the inquisitive man says.

He shoves a device in Dr. Otto’s mouth that gaped it open for inspection.

“I don’t know how your species actually works, but if I’m judging by our biology I don’t see any bruising or damage to your vocal chords,” expressed the man.

“You could’ve asked me to open wide, you didn’t have to ram that thing down my throat, and why are you using words like species, and our. I may have come out of an experimental machine but I’m a man like you,” revealed Dr. Otto.

“No, not like me. I have never seen anything like you in my life. What you are is phenomenally wonderful, and the answer to a question man has been asking for centuries. We now know for sure that we are not alone. Welcome to Earth traveler. My name is Dr. Steven Manchester, what’s yours,” asked Dr. Manchester?

“I am Mal,” the doctor caught himself about to give his former slave name” I am Dr. Otto Lauenburg, and must insist you let me go immediately,” the belligerent doctor demanded.

“I’m afraid we can’t do that Doc, we have no idea what you’re capable of yet,” expressed doctor Manchester.

“What I’m capable of. I am no barbarian. We can very much talk this through but I have a real problem with being in bondage,” says Dr. Otto.

“Now, now I’m giving you this mild sedative to calm you down. You were just in a major accident. We’ll talk again soon,” assured Dr. Manchester.

Now Dr. Otto's eyes begin a reverse process as they start fluttering again, his vision narrows and blurs, and then a deep sleep falls upon him.

This time when he awakes he is all alone in a bright cell like room with a camera in the corner of the room recording his every move, and being monitored by a small group of men in a larger NASA launching sized monitoring room. The room has divisions of heavily surveillance subjects, but Dr. Otto is top priority in this room. His garments are changed to have him in a bright orange jumpsuit with reflective material across the shoulders and down the sides of his pant legs and a small strip across the left of his chest with an ID of A816 stitched into it. As he grabs at the garment to look at the chest plate, he for the first time notices his hands. Grey the skin thick with tiny darker grey freckles on them. He reels back in terror, and immediately seaches for a mirror tht he finds nestled in the corner of his cell, and yells then weeps from the image that stares back at him. A monster! A nightmare-ish cursed stricken monster. A mouth full of small piranha like teeth, large almond shaped eyes with oversized black pupils, his ears

reduced to two tiny holes on the sides of his head. With a long drawn out sigh the irony of being back in captivity was not lost on the doctor. Who now realizes he is no longer Dr. Otto or Malcolm, he is A816.

The group which they called themselves, as they felt as though their work was at the top of the heap which it most certainly was. Continuing to monitor A816 without interruptions The Groups focus was to see if A816 was dangerous or if he has powers that can propel an escape.

Hours slipped into days, days slipped into weeks, weeks became months before A816 had his first visitor. With a buzz in walked in Dr. Steven Manchester.

“Good morning, Dr. Otto,” greeted Dr. Manchester.

“No, don’t call me that it’s too late for that, you can call me what you all have named me A816 is what I go by now,” claimed A816.

“Very well, your eating is steady, your sleeping is steady, you don’t seem to pose a threat to yourself or others, so I’m going to ask you a series of questions ok,” said Dr. Manchester?

“Ok,” responded the depressed A816.

“Where are you from,” Dr. Manchester asked?

“New Jersey, Maple Shade New Jersey,” a depressed A816 replies.

“Nice try where you are from originally,” the gleeful doctor asks?

“I just told you,” a frustrated A816 responds.

“Ok I see today is not a good time let’s try this another time, but maybe with a little encouragement to help you out,” threatened the doctor.

And with a nod as he exited the room the lights started to flash on and off and the song 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' sung by Judy Garland began playing'. During the first day it wasn't such a big deal, but it became increasingly harder to sleep or even think straight with the constant distraction. After a month of non-stop bombardment of the music and random light flickers that seem to go from bright to really bright to dim to blinding, the doctor returned to find a more cooperative A816.

"Look I'll tell you what you want to hear just make it stop," begged A816, and with a nod it did.

"I'm from Cybertron ok, a distant planet not in this solar system where our tech makes robots that can turn into transportation," revealed A816.

He continued to lie to doctor Manchester to stop the abuse to his sensitive ears and massive eyes that can't handle the extreme degrees of lighting that fills the room. Suffering from nosebleeds and tremendous migraines A816 would do anything to stop the pain. Over the years A816 will give Dr. Manchester an incredible wealth of information, some will be totally made up of things he knew from popular culture and other information was from his experience as an accomplished scientist. One of his made up stories was how they educated their children on his planet, through a 6 foot colorful bird and brightly painted furry monsters to teach the children basic and moral lessons. Shortly after this revelation PBS presented the governmentally funded Sesame Street, but A816 did not only deliver fantasy to the doctor but he also provided him with real substantial technology from his time. Throughout the years he gave man, home videos, home game systems, cell phones, and his most important contribution would have to be the internet inspired by a single pudding cup. His relationship with Dr.

Manchester was a quid pro quo dynamic. He could gain certain light pleasures for the info given. His punishment for stubborn days were reduced to none with the success of his ideas, he was given time to think things over, and this was the dynamic for a generation. The two grew quite fond of one another, Dr. Manchester learning what he perceived as the mysteries of life, and A816 finally being treated by someone, anyone like a real person. feeling he hasn't shared since he last saw Dr. Evan and professor Anna lost to history or some alternate time as Marcus and Naomi. He often wonders if they made it out. If they're a little family strived and grew. In his dreams he can see them happy and free living their lives with an ever expanding family who loves and honors one another. That's how he chooses to think of them in his beautiful thoughts. October 5th, 1991 a noticeably older A816 is weaker and in need of certain help to get to and from his favorite bench under the tree in a self contained and heavily monitored opened ceiling cylinder where he can actually see the blue sky, and cotton candy fluffy clouds, and feel the mighty fingers of the sun caressing his face. Joining him is a slightly older Dr. Manchester for a nice sit and chat as they usually do around this time of day.

"My friend you look like crap today," jokes Dr. Manchester.

"You're one to talk, I thought a corpse just walked in here," responded A816 the two men shared a laugh.

"Seriously though, I can't see us being here anymore," said A816.

"Oh cut that out I'm sure we have plenty of time," said Dr. Manchester.

"No Manny we don't. My organs are failing, my limbs are weak, and I can feel the angel of death's cold clammy hands at the base of my neck ready to squeeze the

remaining life out of me until my body is hollowed out husk, for Lou over there to throw into one of those fire pits,” claim A816.

“You may look at me and see differences, but assure you there is no difference between you and me. I’ve known happiness, I’ve known success, I’ve even known love. I had some of the best friends anyone could ever have. No matter the lessons I’ve received, the biggest thing that I’ve learned is that color is superficial and doesn’t matter, it’s like the difference between a black dog, a white, dog or a grey one. Who cares unless the dog is wickedly bad. I was a good one or at least I thought so, but silence is violence, when I could stand up I didn’t and wished that someone somewhere anywhere would stand for me when I needed it most, and that’s when I found my fault. How can a man cry foul when he is committing one? How can I ask for sympathy while ignoring suffering? How can I talk about justice when my ears don’t hear the cries of the innocent. I am a hypocrite that deserves my fate, but I tell you these things so you don’t make the same fundamental mistakes that I did. Live a long and happy life. Know that I go in peace,” the words barely escaped his mouth with the last remnants of oxygen left in his body, Dr. Manchester who was listening to A816 words while looking up at the splendor of the sky when his gaze turned towards the ceasing speech of A816 he saw the being with his eyes closed but his mouth gaped open. The spirit of Doctor Otto Lauenburg passed through the disfigured corpse of subject A816 and into glory.

No fanfare for the incredible scientist, his faithful crew or their astonishing accomplishment. In the end after all is done the best any of us can hope for is rest. Rest

In Peace Dr. Otto, Dr. Mabis, and professor Anna the price you all paid was not only too high for black people it was too high for anybody.