

**THE HELP**

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Based on the novel by  
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WILLIAM FAULKNER wrote of Mammy Callie after her death:

"...she gave to my family a fidelity without stint or calculation or recompense and gave to my childhood an immeasurable devotion and love".

**JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 1963**

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

AIBILEEN, black, 53, sits at a table in a small, green kitchen. She wears a yellow dress with black piping and grips a tattered spiral notebook. Although cracked, the window behind her is crystal clear. Three framed portraits hang on the wall above her: John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and an UNKNOWN YOUNG BLACK MALE wearing thick glasses. Aibileen swallows hard.

**AIBILEEN**

I was...born in 1911...on Piedmont  
Plantation in Cherokee County.  
An UNSEEN WOMAN interviews Aibileen.

**WOMAN (O.C.)**

Did you know as a girl, growing up,  
that one day you'd be a maid?

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am. I did.

**WOMAN (O.C.)**

And you knew that because?

**AIBILEEN**

Momma was a maid. My grandmother  
was a house slave.

**WOMAN (O.C.)**

Oh.

The woman repeats Aibileen's answer slowly as she writes.

**WOMAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)**

A...House...Slave. Uh-huh. Okay.  
Aibileen squeezes the notebook in her lap.

**WOMAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)**

Now, did you ever dream of being  
something else?  
Aibileen gulps. She doesn't answer. The room is quiet.

**WOMAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)**

Well then, what's it feel like, to  
raise a white child when your own  
child's at home...being looked  
after by somebody else?

2.

Aibileen's hand trembles as she sips from a glass of water.  
She glances sadly up to the picture of the young black male.

**FADE TO BLACK:**

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

I done raised seventeen kids in my  
life. Lookin' after white babies,  
that's what I do.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - MAE MOBLEY'S ROOM - MORNING**

MAE MOBLEY LEEFOLT, 2 1/2 years old, lies in a crib, crying.

AIBILEEN enters. Her dark black skin contrasts angelically with a brilliant white work dress, white panty hose and shoes

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

I know how to get them babies asleep, stop cryin' and go in the toilet bowl before they mommas even get outta bed in the mornin.'

Aibileen lifts Mae Mobley out of her crib and pulls her into her expansive bosom.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

Babies like fat. They like big fat legs too. That I know.

Aibileen sits with Mae Mobley in a rocking chair.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

I work from eight to four, six days a week. Ninety-five cents an hour comes to a hundred seventy-two dollars ever month. I do all the cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and grocery shopping, but mostly, I take care a baby girl...And law, I worry she gone be fat. Ain't gonna be no beauty queen either.

Mae Mobley reaches up and touches Aibileen's face. Aibileen kisses her and whispers in her ear.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

You is kind. You is smart. You is important.

Mae Mobley's mother, ELIZABETH LEEFOLT, 21 and lanky, enters wearing a green dress very much under construction. Pins and double-stick tape hold it all together.

Elizabeth has pointed features and a nest of teased, brittle hair.

**ELIZABETH**

Aibileen, bridge club's in an hour!  
Did you finish the chicken salad?

3.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

Oh, and Hilly's deviled eggs. No paprika!  
Elizabeth rotates around like the Tin Man.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

Does this dress look homemade?

**AIBILEEN**

I reckon when you finish, it won't.  
Elizabeth exits with her pinned hemline sloping at a good  
twenty degree angle. Aibileen shakes her head.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

Miss Leefolt still don't pick Baby  
Girl up but once a day. The  
birthin' blues had got holt a Miss  
Leefolt pretty hard. I done seen it  
happen plenty a times...once babies  
start havin' they own babies. And  
the young white ladies of  
Jackson...Oh, law, they was havin'  
some babies.

**INT. JACKSON JOURNAL NEWSPAPER - OFFICE - SAME DAY**

A smoking RECEPTIONIST, 50, leads EUGENIA "SKEETER" PHELAN,  
23, across a smoke-filled news office. Even the light bulbs  
have yellowed.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

But, not Miss Skeeter...  
Skeeter has very frizzy blond hair cut short above her  
shoulders. She carries a red satchel.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

No babies...No man...And not  
lookin'.  
She wears flats, careful not to add more than a centimeter  
to  
her towering height. Dressed well, Skeeter tugs on her  
unfamiliar attire.

**INT. MR. BLACKLY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

The receptionist and Skeeter enter the office of MR. HAROLD  
BLACKLY, 68. He has greased, grey hair and the face of a  
mean man. Smoke pours into the room.

**MR. BLACKLY**

Shut the Goddamn door!  
He snaps his fingers over a chair. Skeeter sits down.

**MR. BLACKLY (CONT'D)**

They announced last week  
cigarettes'll kill you.

4.

Mr. Blackly pours a pack of nuts into his mouth.

**MR. BLACKLY (CONT'D)**

**(CHEWING)**

Okay, let's see what you got.  
Skeeter quickly hands Mr. Blackly a resumé. He skims it  
over, marking it violently with a red pen.

**MR. BLACKLY (CONT'D)**

"Murrah High Editor, Ole Miss Rebel  
Rouser Editor, double major, Junior  
League editor...Damn girl, didn't  
you have any fun?"

**SKEETER**

Is that...important?  
Mr. Blackly sighs, hands the resumé back to Skeeter.

**MR. BLACKLY**

You got any references?  
Skeeter nods slowly. She takes a deep breath and pulls a  
letter out of her satchel. She hands it to Mr. Blackly.  
Mr. Blackly snatches the letter and reads it quickly,  
mouthing the words as he does. He drops the letter on his  
desk, and looks to Skeeter, flabbergasted.

**MR. BLACKLY (CONT'D)**

That...is a rejection letter.  
Skeeter's face flushes hot and quick.

**SKEETER**

Not exactly. Missus Stein-

**MR. BLACKLY**

-STEIN?! Missus who?  
Skeeter points toward the letterhead.

**SKEETER**

Elaine Stein, Senior Editor at  
Harper and Row Publishing. In New  
York. I'm going to be a serious  
writer, Mr. Blackly. So, when I  
applied to Harper and Row, Missus

**STEIN WROTE-**

**MR. BLACKLY**

-She told you "no."

**SKEETER**

Until I gain some experience, Mr. Blackly! See, it says it right there at the end. "Great potential...Gain some experience and please apply again."

Mr. Blackly pours the rest of the peanuts in his mouth.

5.

**MR. BLACKLY**

Oh, Christ...I guess you'll do.  
Can you clean?

**SKEETER**

Clean?

Mr. Blackly sees cigarette smoke bleeding under his door.

**MR. BLACKLY**

Clean!

Mr. Blackly pulls up a box filled with letters and newspapers. He slams it down in front of Skeeter.

**MR. BLACKLY (CONT'D)**

Miss Myrna's gone shit-house crazy on us, drunk hair spray or something. Read her past columns and all these letters. Answer them just like she did, nobody'll know the damn difference.  
Skeeter forces a smile.

**MR. BLACKLY (CONT'D)**

You know who Miss Myrna is?

**SKEETER**

**(COVERING)**

I read her articles all the time.

**MR. BLACKLY**

Articles? Ha! It's a cleaning advice column, Miss Phelan. Eight bucks a week. Copy due Thursday.

Mr. Blackly picks up the phone and starts yelling at someone.

Skeeter excitedly grabs the box of letters and leaves.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - BATHROOM - SAME DAY**

HILLY HOLBROOK, 22, white and hefty, sits on a closed toilet seat in a well-appointed bathroom. She's covered in red plaid and bows and has a round face topped by a perfect beehive.

**HILLY**

**(SCREAMING UPWARD)**

Momma! We're late for bridge!  
Hilly carefully rolls toilet paper out from its holder. She raises a pencil and places the tiniest dot imaginable on the first and second sheets of paper.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Miss Hilly was the first of the babies to have a baby. And it must a come out of her like the eleventh commandment. `Cause once Miss Hilly had a baby, ever girl at the bridge table wanted one too.

**6.**

She carefully rolls the paper back up in the roll.

**HILLY**

Minny! Go get Momma!

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - ENTRY FOYER STAIRWELL - SAME TIME**

MINNY JACKSON, 33, black, plump and in uniform, rolls her eyes beneath a crystal chandelier. She shouts up the mahogany stairwell.

**MINNY**

Missus Walters?! You need help coming down?  
MISSUS WALTERS, 60, passes quietly behind Minny.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

I'm down!

Mিনny jumps with a yelp, spins around.

**MISSUS WALTERS (CONT'D)**

Been down.

**MINNY**

Gone give me a heart attack!  
Missus Walters ambles toward the closet door. Minny quickly tries to turn her toward the front door. Missus Walters resists.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

Mিনny, I'm getting my coat.  
Missus Walters opens the closet.

**MINNY**

It's ninety degrees out there,  
Missus Walters.  
Missus Walters pulls out a red, wool coat with cheetah print collar.  
The early stages of Alzheimer's have appeared, but Missus Walters is still quite proud at eighty percent capacity.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Once Missus Walters' arteries went hard, Miss Hilly moved her and Minny in with her. Fired the maid she had just to make room. See, Minny about the best cook in Mississippi, and Miss Hilly wanted her.  
Hilly's approach is marked by the whishing sound of her plaid, fat thighs.

7.

She nonchalantly grabs the coat from her mother and carries it out the door.  
Mিনny and Missus Walters follow. Minny carries a chocolate pie. Hilly barks over her shoulder.

**HILLY**

Mিনny, William took Billy out for ice cream. So, hurry back and get Billy down for his nap. No dilly dallying.

**MINNY**

Yes, ma'am.  
Mিনny raises the pie behind Hilly's beehive, dreaming of smashing it into her head.



**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Minnie my best friend. A old lady  
like me lucky to have her.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - BATHROOM- SAME DAY**

Aibileen kneels next to Mae Mobley who sits on a small  
children's training toilet.

**MAE MOBLEY**

No!

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

It's a tricky thing...you try to  
make a baby go in the toilet bowl  
before it's time. If theys can't  
get the hang of it, theys get to  
thinking low a theyselves.  
Mae Mobley sticks her lip out.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

You drunk up two glasses a grape  
juice, I know you got to tee-tee.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Nooo.  
Mae Mobley shakes her head.

**AIBILEEN**

I give you a cookie if you go.  
Tee-tee immediately sprinkles into the bowl.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Mae Mobley! You going!  
Aibileen and Mae Mobley laugh excitedly as Elizabeth storms  
into the bathroom in her finished dress. The hemline now  
slants in the other direction.

**8.**

**ELIZABETH**

Aibileen, the girls are pulling up,  
and the table isn't set!

**MAE MOBLEY**

Mae Mobley go, Momma!

**ELIZABETH**

Get in your room! Right now!  
Mae Mobley rises behind Aibileen's leg.

**MAE MOBLEY**

I sorry.  
Elizabeth reaches down and scoops up Mae Mobley like a sack of potatoes.  
Mae Mobley looks to Aibileen over her mother's shoulder, her eyes have welled up.  
Aibileen mouths "I love you" and blows her a kiss.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The Leefolt's small, wood paneled, two bedroom "ranch" is destined to become income property one day.  
FIVE YOUNG WOMEN, early 20s, and Elizabeth hover around two collapsible card tables arranged in the living room.  
Aibileen methodically arranges grapes on a platter of chicken salad resting on Elizabeth's dining table. The table has a small L-SHAPED CRACK in the middle.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

I lost my own boy, Treelore, right before I started waitin' on the Leefolts...  
Elizabeth glances anxiously to the dining table then catches eyes with Aibileen, nodding ever so slightly.

**CLOSE ON:**

CRACK  
Aibileen carefully slides the platter over the L-SHAPED making sure it's hidden.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

After Treelore died, a bitter seed was planted inside a me. And I just didn't feel so accepting anymore.  
Hilly enters the front door holding Missus Walters coat.

**HILLY**

Hey, girls!

9.

**YOUNG WOMEN**

**(IN UNISON)**

Hey, Hilly!  
Minnie follows behind holding the pie and Missus Walters'  
arm.

**HILLY**

(over her shoulder)  
Put Momma in a chair before she  
breaks a hip.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

I'm not deaf yet, Hilly.  
Minnie spies Aibileen in the corner and gives her a "here we  
go" look as she lowers Missus Walters into a chair.  
Hilly approaches Aibileen with the coat.

**HILLY**

Aibileen, I want you to have this  
coat. It's too big for Momma now  
and it's way too expensive to put  
in the coat drive.  
Hilly extends the coat with a smile.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

All yours.  
Aibileen takes the coat.

**AIBILEEN**

Thank you, Miss Hilly.

**HILLY**

Go on. Try it on.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Minnie plows through the swing door and reaches for Hilly's  
deviled eggs.  
Aibileen rushes in behind her wearing the cheetah collared  
coat. The sleeves are about a foot too short.

**AIBILEEN**

Hold on! Those are Miss Hilly's.  
Aibileen pulls another plate of eggs out of the fridge.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Gots to have paprika on `em.  
Minnie takes an egg. It disappears in a single bite.

**MINNIE**

Forgive me, Lord, but I'm gonna  
have to kill that woman.

10.

Aibileen removes the coat and lays it over a chair.

**AIBILEEN**

Watch yo mouth, Minny.

**MINNY**

Looks like a walking Christmas  
present with all them bows.  
Aibileen shakes with silent laughter.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

And, now she gone to puttin' pencil  
marks on the toilet paper.

**AIBILEEN**

Oh, law! Did she?

**MINNY**

Uh-hum. But, I carry paper in from  
my own damn house. That fool don't  
know.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

Elizabeth and Hilly cackle with a group of girls as Missus  
Walters sits on the couch watching "Guiding Light."  
Skeeter suddenly rushes through the front door.

**SKEETER**

Hey, girls.

**GIRLS**

**(IN UNISON)**

Hey, Skeeter.

JOLENE FRENCH, 24, approaches and hugs Skeeter.

**JOLENE**

Well, if it isn't Long-Haul-  
Skeeter. We didn't think you'd  
ever leave Ole Miss.

**SKEETER**

Well, it's supposed to take four

years, Jolene.  
Skeeter spins around to Hilly and Elizabeth with a sigh.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Sorry I'm late. I had to stop by  
the cleaners and pick up my black  
dress.  
Hilly and Elizabeth look at Skeeter with concern.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

What?

**11.**

**HILLY**

About supper club tonight...Honey,  
Stuart had to cancel.

**SKEETER**

Again?  
Hilly places her hand on Skeeter's shoulder.

**HILLY**

He can't get off the rig, Skeeter.  
It's offshore! Stuart is a very  
successful oil man.

**SKEETER**

I'm starting to think this Stuart  
is a figment of your imagination.

**ELIZABETH**

Raleigh called his cousin down in  
Hattiesburg. He'll drive up.

**SKEETER**

The cousin with one eye?!  
Elizabeth nods.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I guess his black patch will match  
my dress. Just forget it.  
Skeeter storms off. Hilly glares at Elizabeth.

**HILLY**

One eye?!

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER THE SAME DAY**

Aibileen clears the dining table as bridge begins.  
Hilly, Elizabeth and Skeeter sit with Jolene. Skeeter takes

a

deep breath and belts out her news.

**SKEETER**

I got a job today... at The Jackson  
Journal!

Everyone looks at Skeeter as if she just threw up on  
herself.

Finally, Hilly pats Skeeter on the leg.

**HILLY**

They'd be a fool not to hire you.  
Jolene raises her glass.

**JOLENE**

To Skeeter...and her job. Last  
stop `til marriage.  
Hilly kicks Jolene under the table.

12.

**SKEETER**

The Miss Myrna column. Have y'all  
read it?

**HILLY**

Well, no! But, I bet the poor  
girls without any help, in South  
Jackson, read it like the King  
James.

Everyone laughs. Skeeter's forehead crinkles.

**SKEETER**

Elizabeth, would you mind if I talk  
to Aibileen? To help me answer  
some of the letters? Just until I  
get a knack for it.

Aibileen clears dishes as if she hasn't heard a thing.  
Elizabeth gets very still.

**ELIZABETH**

Aibileen? My Aibileen? What can't  
you just get Constantine to help  
you?  
Skeeter looks to her lap and shakes her head.

**SKEETER**

Constantine...quit us.

**ELIZABETH HILLY**

What?! Oh, my gosh!  
Skeeter nods her head sadly.

**HILLY**

I'm so sorry, Skeeter.

**SKEETER**

I really don't want to talk about  
it. Okay?  
The girls nod.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Anyway...I don't know how to answer  
these letters.  
Elizabeth looks to Aibileen.

**ELIZABETH**

Well...I mean as long as it doesn't  
interfere with her work.  
A phone rings. Elizabeth nods to Aibileen.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Aibileen rushes in the kitchen and answers the phone.

**13.**

**AIBILEEN**

Leefolt residence.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE (INTERCUT) - KITCHEN - SAME TIME**

**CLOSE ON:**

Pink, fuzzy slippers anchoring bare, sexy legs stand on a  
black and white check floor.

**CELIA FOOTE (O.C.)**

Ah-hem. Hello, is Elizabeth in?  
Rising up a slim torso, sizeable cleavage bursts out of a  
pink robe's collar.

**AIBILEEN**

in

She having bridge club right now.  
May I take a message?  
CELIA FOOTE, 28, peroxide blonde, stands in all her country  
girl glory.  
She speaks with a thick, unrefined, Southern accent, mired  
insecurity.

**CELIA**

Please tell her Celia Foote called  
again. I'll call back tomorrow.

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.  
Celia nervously twists herself around in the phone cord.

**CELIA**

Ah-hem. Miss?  
"Miss" strikes Aibileen as very odd.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

I'm looking for some help at my  
house. You know any maids looking?

**AIBILEEN**

No, ma'am.

**CELIA FOOTE**

Okay. Celia Foote. Emerson 6-8-4.  
Bye, now.  
Celia hands up the phone with a frown and sips from a coca-  
cola bottle.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Aibileen enters the living room with a coffee pot.

**14.**

**ELIZABETH**

Who was that on the phone?

**AIBILEEN**

Miss Celia Foote called again.  
Elizabeth leans over and touches Hilly's arm.

**ELIZABETH**

I've never called her back, Hilly.



**HILLY**

She can't take a hint, can she?

**JOLENE**

Who's Celia Foote?

**HILLY**

That tacky girl Johnny married.

**ELIZABETH**

Girl? I heard she's twenty-eight.

**JOLENE**

Oh my God!

**HILLY**

Uh-hmm, worked concessions at a LSU game and sold him a hotdog. And, boy, he got a whole lot more. All the girls laugh.

**SKEETER**

Could have been you, Hilly.

**HILLY**

And live thirty minutes outside of town? Anyway, I ran into her at the beauty parlor, and she had the nerve to ask if she could help with the children's benefit.

**SKEETER**

Aren't we taking non-members? The benefit's gotten so big.

**HILLY**

Yes, but we're not telling her. Everyone laughs but Skeeter. Aibileen pours Skeeter a cup of coffee. Skeeter looks up decidedly and smiles.

**SKEETER**

Thank you, Aibileen.  
Hilly begins squirming in her seat, obviously making a point.  
Elizabeth leans over.

**ELIZABETH**

Oh, Hilly, I wish you'd just go use the bathroom.

**HILLY**

Ah-hem. I'm fine.  
Missus Walters shouts out from the sofa.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

She's upset cause the nigra uses  
the guest bath, and so do we.  
Elizabeth turns to Aibileen.

**ELIZABETH**

Aibileen, go check on Mae Mobley.  
Aibileen disappears. Elizabeth leans into Hilly.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

Just go use mine and Raleigh's.  
Hilly hiss-whispers.

**HILLY**

If Aibileen uses the guest  
bathroom, I'm sure she uses yours  
too.

**ELIZABETH**

**SHE DOES NOT!**

Aibileen turns the corner in the hall and stops.

**HILLY**

Wouldn't you rather them take their  
business outside?  
Skeeter sees a reflection of Aibileen listening off of a  
picture in the hall. Skeeter tries to change the subject.

**SKEETER**

Did y'all see the cover of "Life"  
this week? Jackie's never looked

**MORE REGAL-**

**HILLY**

-Tell Raleigh every penny he spends  
on a colored's bathroom, he'll get  
back in spades when y'all sell.  
It's just plain dangerous.  
Everybody knows they carry  
different diseases than we do. I  
double.  
Elizabeth takes a puff of her cigarette and fidgets with her  
cards.

**ELIZABETH**

I can't ask Raleigh until tax season. But, it would be nice.

**HILLY**

That's why I've drafted The Home Help Sanitation Initiative.

16.

**SKEETER**

"The Home"...the what?!

**HILLY**

As a disease preventative bill that requires every white home to have a separate bathroom for the colored help. I've even notified the Surgeon General of Mississippi. I'll pass.  
Skeeter again glances at Aibileen. Their eyes meet.

**SKEETER**

Maybe we ought to just build you a bathroom outside, Hilly.  
The room grows eerily quiet.

**HILLY**

You ought not to joke about the colored situation.  
Hilly leans in toward Skeeter.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

I'll do whatever it takes to protect our town. Your lead, Jolene.  
Jolene suddenly looks to a wall clock. She jumps up and throws her cards to the table.

**JOLENE**

I have to skedaddle! Gotta get over to the station!

**(EXCITEDLY)**

Daddy's letting me do the weather tonight!

**EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - BACKYARD - SAME DAY**

Celia delicately prunes two rosebushes. Her long pink fingernails wrap easily around a pair of sheers. As Celia stands back to admire her work, We widen to see the Foote estate. Ancient oaks dripping in Spanish moss surround a perfectly manicured lawn. "Tara" pales in comparison. Oddly, the two rosebushes have been planted in the center of the lawn, jeopardizing the Antebellum Feng Shui.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Now, Miss Celia had her a man.  
`Bout the best lookin' man in all  
of Mississippi. But, no baby and  
no friends.

JOHNNY FOOTE, 23, Celia's ridiculously handsome husband, sneaks up behind her as he removes his jacket and tie.

17.

**JOHNNY**

Roses look like weeds next to you.  
Celia turns with a yelp. She slaps him playfully.

**CELIA**

Johnny, you scared the daylights  
out of me!  
Johnny begins kissing her neck.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

You're home early.  
Celia pushes him back.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

Johnny, I can't get any of your old  
friends from school to call me  
back.

**JOHNNY**

Oh, who cares, honey. We got all  
we need right here.  
Johnny kisses her again and lowers her to the grass.

**CELIA**

Johnny, honestly!

**JOHNNY**

Doctor's orders.  
Johnny starts kissing Celia's breasts. She becomes uneasy  
and rolls out from under him.

**CELIA**

I don't know what's taking us so long. I'm sorry.  
Johnny brushes hair from Celia's face.

**JOHNNY**

Hey, we've never done it in the yard. Maybe that's the trick.  
Celia seductively bites her lower lip.

**CELIA**

Watch my hair.  
Johnny's hand slides up her thigh.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY**

Bridge over, Skeeter smokes while watching through a window as Minny arrives in Hilly's car. Skeeter blows smoke toward Hilly and Elizabeth saying good-bye.

**18.**

A sermon plays over an old AM radio nestled between canisters of sugar and flour.  
Aibileen enters with a stack of dirty coffee cups.

**SKEETER**

Aibileen?  
Aibileen becomes nervous at the sight of Skeeter alone.

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.

**SKEETER**

I had hoped to ask you myself if you could help me with the "Miss Myrna" letters...

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.

**SKEETER**

So...Would you help me?  
Aibileen nods and looks out to Elizabeth on the street.

**AIBILEEN**

Miss Myrna gets it wrong lotta times. Be good to get it right.

**SKEETER**

Thank you, Aibileen. I plan on splitting the pay with you, too.  
Aibileen doesn't respond. She grabs a basket of rolls.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Listen...all that talk in there today. Hilly's talk I mean...I'm sorry you had to hear that.  
Aibileen quickly turns her back to Skeeter. A gospel choir begins singing on the radio.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Is that Preacher Green's sermon on the radio?

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am, it is.

**SKEETER**

That reminds me so much of my maid growing up.  
Aibileen starts wiping down a serving tray.

**AIBILEEN**

Constantine and me...were in church circle together.

**19.**

Skeeter turns to Aibileen as she puts out her cigarette.

**SKEETER**

She loved me like you love Mae Mobley.

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.  
Skeeter moves closer to Aibileen.

**SKEETER**

Aibileen? How could she just quit like that?  
Aibileen stops wiping and looks up to Skeeter...

**AIBILEEN**

Quit?

**SKEETER**

Yes. When I got home from school

last week, Momma said she had quit.  
Back in March to go live with her  
people up in Chicago. She didn't  
leave me a note or anything.  
Aibileen turns and resumes wiping the tray.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Could you do that to Mae Mobley?  
Aibileen slowly turns back to Skeeter.

**AIBILEEN**

No, ma'am. I couldn't...

**SKEETER**

Do you have an address for her or  
anything?  
Aibileen shrugs her shoulders, reeling it all back in.  
Just then, Elizabeth walks into the kitchen holding papers  
stapled together. She looks between Aibileen and Skeeter.

**ELIZABETH**

I'm sorry. Did I interrupt  
something?  
Skeeter and Aibileen shake their heads.  
Elizabeth hands Skeeter the papers. Home Help Sanitation  
Initiative is written on the cover.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

Hilly wants this put in the League  
newsletter.  
Skeeter nods.

20.

**SKEETER**

Aibileen, I'll drop by at ten  
tomorrow to get started on Miss  
Myrna.  
Elizabeth looks at Aibileen.

**ELIZABETH**

Tomorrow is silver polishing day,  
so y'all make it quick, okay?

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER THAT DAY**

Skeeter speeds down a country road lined with ancient oak  
trees in a white Cadillac.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

I knew I had said too much to Miss Skeeter, but Constantine's story weren't mine to tell. Some things a girl shouldn't have to know about her own mother.

Her frizzy hair swirls about as she passes a truck full of cotton.

**INT. CADILLAC (FANTASY SEQUENCE) - SAME TIME**

Skeeter looks ahead and sees an OLDER BLACK WOMAN walking with a LITTLE BLONDE GIRL, 6. They hold hands. The black woman smiles and waves as Skeeter passes. When Skeeter looks in her rear view mirror, they're gone. Skeeter suddenly stops the car just short of an intersecting gravel road. Skeeter slowly turns down the old road.

**EXT. CONSTANTINE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Skeeter's car pulls into the overgrown yard of an old shack with a rusted-out tin roof. Two clapboard rooms are separated by an open breezeway. The front door is cracked open. Skeeter gets out and walks toward Constantine's home.

**INT. CONSTANTINE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter enters to find only a small bed, dresser, table, rocking chair and a wood burning stove. Past intruders have long since taken anything of value.

**21.**

As Skeeter approaches Constantine's bed, an OPOSSUM scurries out from underneath. Skeeter screams as the opossum runs out the door. Her eyes suddenly catch something. Lying on the bed is an OLD CORN PIPE. Skeeter picks it up and brings it to her face. Her eyes begin to well up.



**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter pulls in front of a grand antebellum home and parks to the side of her family's graveyard.

Skeeter carries her black dress up the stairs of a covered porch.

An old black man with white hair, JAMESO, 70, tightens a porch swing.

**SKEETER**

Hey, Jameso.

**JAMESO**

Hello, Miss Eugenia.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - ENTRY FOYER - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter walks through the front door.

**SKEETER**

Momma!

If the Smithsonian had wished to assemble the perfect antebellum home, Skeeter would be standing in it.

**INT. PHELAN HOME - PARENTS' BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

WIGS

Skeeter enters and looks around curiously at an ARRAY OF resting atop a dresser.

**SKEETER**

Momma?

Skeeter's mother, CHARLOTTE BOUDREAU CANTELLE PHELAN, 50, glides into the room wearing a wig. Her floral print dress has a gazillion perfectly pressed pleats.

Charlotte turns to a mirror and adjusts an auburn-colored, 'pixie' cut.

**CHARLOTTE**

Is this a little too young?

**SKEETER**

It's a little too everything.

Charlotte removes the wig with a sigh. Only now do we realize her decision to wear wigs isn't elective. Thinning hair detracts from her perfectly made up face. Charlotte puts on a classic bouffant/flip in dark brown.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Much better.

**CHARLOTTE**

Your daddy bought me this dress in

`58.

**SKEETER**

Mom, I want to ask you about

**CONSTANTINE-**

**CHARLOTTE**

-Right after Ole Miss won the Sugar Bowl.

Charlotte unzips the dress and takes it off.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Come on, you try it on.

**SKEETER**

What really happened?

Charlotte winces with pain and grasps her stomach.

**CHARLOTTE**

I told you...she went to live with her people in Chicago...Now, Skeeter, your mother is dying, and she wants to see you in this dress.

Charlotte stands in her slip and bra holding the dress. Skeeter begins taking off her clothes.

**SKEETER**

How could she just take off without telling me?

**CHARLOTTE**

I told her not to write you. I didn't want you upset in the middle of final exams. Honey, we were just a job to her. With them it's all about money...Did I tell you Fanny Peatrow got engaged? After she got that teller job, her mother said she was just swimming in proposals.

**SKEETER**

Good for "Fat Fanny Peatrow."  
She lowers the dress over Skeeter's head and zips it.

23.

**CHARLOTTE**

This looks precious on you! Four years ago my daughter went off to college, and what did she come home with?

**SKEETER CHARLOTTE**

A diploma. A pretty piece of paper.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Hilly and Elizabeth have such lovely children.

**SKEETER**

They dropped out of college to become housewives, Mother.

**CHARLOTTE**

If only you'd show a little gumption, Eugenia...

**SKEETER**

Well, I did get a job today.

**CHARLOTTE**

You did?

**SKEETER**

Writing...for The Jackson Journal.  
Charlotte plumps up the dress around Skeeter's behind.

**CHARLOTTE**

Great. You can write my obituary.  
"Charlotte Phelan dead. Her daughter still single."

**SKEETER**

Momma, would it really be so terrible if I never met a husband?  
With that, Charlotte grabs Skeeter's hand and takes her to a love seat. They sit. This is serious.

**CHARLOTTE**

I need to...ask you something,  
Skeeter. I read the other day  
about how some girls...get  
unbalanced, start thinking  
these...well, unnatural thoughts.  
Charlotte begins to twist the handkerchief she holds.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Are you...do you...find men  
attractive? Are you having  
unnatural thoughts about...  
Charlotte shuts her eyes tight.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Girls or...or women?

**24.**

**SKEETER**

Oh my God!

**CHARLOTTE**

Because, this article says there's  
a cure, a special root tea.  
Skeeter jumps up.

**SKEETER**

Mother, I want to be with girls as  
much as you wanna be with Jameso.

**CHARLOTTE**

Eugenia!  
Skeeter storms out of the room.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

**(SHOUTING)**

Carlton's bringing Rebecca to  
dinner. Try to look presentable!

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

The Phelan dining room is lit solely by candles.  
The Phelan's new maid, PASCAGOLUA, 40, rolls a cart of  
casseroles around the table.  
Charlotte sits at the head of the table. She's having a bowl  
of broth.  
Skeeter sits next to her Father, ROBERT PHELAN, 60.

Skeeter's brother, CARLTON, 25, sits next to his fiancé, REBECCA, 21. They're perfectly groomed with Hollywood good looks.

**CARLTON**

What the hell do you know about cleaning a house, Skeeter?

**SKEETER**

It's a start, Carlton.

**CARLTON**

**(MOCKINGLY)**

I thought you wanted to write books.

**ROBERT**

Leave your sister alone, Son. I'm proud of you, Sweetheart. Charlotte scoops up some broth with a spoon.

**25.**

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh, the irony of it all. Givin' advice on how to keep up a home when she...

Charlotte's spoon goes in her mouth. Pascagolua tries to scoop some sort of casserole covered in almonds onto Skeeter's plate. Skeeter stops her.

**SKEETER**

Oh! No, Pascagolua! You couldn't have known this...But, see, I'm allergic to almonds.

**PASCAGOLUA**

Sorry, Miss Eugenia.

**SKEETER**

Last time I had an almond, I stopped liking men. Charlotte glares at Skeeter. Carlton lets out a chuckle. Rebecca is mortified.

**REBECCA**

Oh my Lord.

**SKEETER**

It's okay, Rebecca. They have a special root tea now.

**CHARLOTTE**

You have pushed it, Young Lady!  
Pascagolua scurries off. Skeeter turns to her father...

**SKEETER**

Daddy, what happened to Constantine?  
The room grows silent. Carlton looks down to his plate.

**ROBERT**

Ah...well, Constantine went to live with her family. People move on, Skeeter. But I do wish she'd stayed down here with us.

**SKEETER**

I don't believe you.  
Skeeter looks to her mother who immediately busies herself with scooping up more broth.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Mother, did you...fire her?

**CHARLOTTE**

You wouldn't understand. Not until you've hired help of your own.

26.

**SKEETER**

She raised me!  
Charlotte slaps the table and stands.

**CHARLOTTE**

**SHE DID NOT!**  
Skeeter's eyes fill with tears...

**SKEETER**

She worked here for twenty-nine years.  
Charlotte presses both hands to her stomach.

**CHARLOTTE**

It was a colored thing, and I've put it behind me.  
Charlotte passes behind Rebecca and kisses her head.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Excuse me, Rebecca. My daughter  
has upset my cancerous ulcers.  
As Charlotte leaves the room, Rebecca looks at Skeeter like  
she's the worst person on earth.  
Skeeter gets up and storms off into the entry foyer.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION (FLASHBACK) - ENTRY FOYER - NIGHT**

Skeeter, 13 and lanky, wears a party dress. Despite a tight  
bun, her strong-willed hair has started to frizz.  
Skeeter's father and brother race down the stairs with  
suitcases. Carlton wears a varsity sweater.

**SKEETER**

Good luck down there, Carlton.

**CARLTON**

Have fun at the dance, Skeeter  
Legs.  
Robert and Carlton race outside as Charlotte enters, healthy  
and glowing.

**CHARLOTTE**

Eugenia! You've grown another inch  
since breakfast. Go put on a dress  
that fits before that boy and his  
daddy come pick you up.  
A horn blows. Charlotte kisses Skeeter on the cheek and then  
looks over to CONSTANTINE, 50.

**27.**

Constantine stands tall. Her skin is black as night. Her  
eyes have a striking honey colored hue to them. She wears a  
white sleeping gown.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Pray Carlton doesn't like LSU,  
Constantine. It's so far. It  
might be the last we see of him.  
The horn blows again. Charlotte is out the door.  
Skeeter turns to Constantine who is all smiles.

**CONSTANTINE**

Gone be just you and me all  
weekend.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION (FLASHBACK) - PATIO - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter sits at a picnic table smoking a cigarette.  
Constantine smokes tobacco out of a corn pipe.

**SKEETER**

I just couldn't tell her I didn't  
get asked to the dance.

**CONSTANTINE**

Some things we should just keep to  
ourselves.  
Skeeter looks down to her long, bony legs.

**SKEETER**

I'm already taller than the boys'  
basketball coach. How tall are  
you, Constantine?

**CONSTANTINE**

I'm five-thirteen, so quit feeling  
sorry for yourself.

**SKEETER**

Momma was third runner up in the  
Miss South Carolina pageant.

**CONSTANTINE**

"Miss" what? Shoot, Child! You  
gone be "Miss Something Better."  
Constantine grabs Skeeter's hand and presses her thumb  
firmly to her palm.

**CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)**

Now you listen. Your momma didn't  
pick her life. It pick her, and she  
done even know it. You gone do  
something big with yours. Bigger  
than your momma or your brother.  
Constantine lets go of Skeeter's palm and wipes a tear from  
her face.

**28.**

**SKEETER**

What about you? What did you want  
to be, Constantine?



Constantine laughs.

**CONSTANTINE**

Oh, Child! We don't get to pick.  
This pick us, and that just how it  
is.  
Tight on Skeeter's face as Constantine gives her a big hug.

**INT. PHELEN PLANTATION - SKEETER'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING**

Skeeter lies in bed staring holes into the ceiling as a rooster announces the morning. A sudden revelation washes over her. In a flash, Skeeter is out of bed and running down the stairs.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Pascagoula tends to a skillet full of eggs next to a black and white TV resting on the counter.

**CLOSE ON TELEVISION:**

Jolene French attempts to deliver the weather on WLBT.

**JOLENE**

Sunny skies and a high of ninety-eight today with ninety-nine percent humidity. There's a slight chance of afternoon showers so y'all carry an umbrella.  
Jolene pivots to camera, lowers her chin and smiles. Skeeter runs past Pascagoula with a phone and disappears inside the pantry.

**INT. HARPER AND ROW PUBLISHING - OFFICE - NEW YORK - LATER**

ELAINE STEIN, 45, hard but stylish, talks on the phone in a large corner office. She lights a cigarette and swivels her chair toward the Manhattan skyline.

**MISS STEIN**

What gave you this idea, Miss Phelan? I'm...curious.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION (INTERCUT) - PANTRY - SAME TIME**

Skeeter sits on a huge sack of flour. A millennium's supply of can goods fills the shelves.

29.

**SKEETER**

I was...well, I was raised by a colored woman. I've seen how simple it can be and...well, how complex it can be, too...between the families and the help.

**MISS STEIN**

Continue.

**SKEETER**

I'd like to write something from the point of view of the help. These colored women raise white children, and then twenty years later those children become the employer. It's that irony, Miss Stein, that we love them and they love us yet...we don't even let them use the toilet in the house. Miss Stein's swivels her chair back around and sits up.

**MISS STEIN**

I'm listening.

**SKEETER**

Margaret Mitchell glorified the mammy figure who dedicates her whole life to a white family but no one...ever asked Mammy how she felt about it. There is both undisguised hate for white women and an inexplicable love, but nobody ever talks about it down here.

**MISS STEIN**

So, a side to this never before heard.

**SKEETER**

Yes!  
Charlotte knocks on the pantry door.

**CHARLOTTE (O.C.)**

Skeeter, who are you talking to in there?  
Skeeter covers the mouth piece and opens the door.

**SKEETER**

Go! Away!  
Skeeter slams the door.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

So, yes, their side of the story.  
Skeeter leans back against the shelves.

**30.**

**MISS STEIN**

Who was that?

**SKEETER**

My mother. She just dropped by to-

**MISS STEIN**

Look, no maid in her right mind would ever tell you the truth. That's a hell of a risk in a place like Jackson, Mississippi. I watched them try to integrate your bus station on the news. Oy! They jammed fifty-five Negroes in a jail built for four.  
Skeeter panics.

**SKEETER**

I already have a maid.  
Skeeter can't believe what just came out of her mouth. Miss Stein rises and sits on the edge of her desk.

**MISS STEIN**

Really? A negro maid has already agreed to talk to you?  
Skeeter blinks hard. No turning back now.

**SKEETER**

Yes, ma'am...

**MISS STEIN**

Well...I suppose I could read what you come up with. The book biz could use a little rattling.

**SKEETER**

You'd do that?

**MISS STEIN**

I'm saying I'll let you know if it's even worth pursuing.

**SKEETER**

Oh, thank you, Miss Stein!

**MISS STEIN**

And for God's sake, you're a twenty-four-year-old educated woman. Go get an apartment.  
She hangs up.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY**

Skeeter sits across the table from Aibileen, reading the 'Miss Myrna' letters.

**31.**

Outside, winds howl, and the sky grows dark. Jolene's forecast appears to be a bit off.

**SKEETER**

"Dear Miss Myrna, How do I remove the rings from my fat, slovenly husband's shirt collar when he is such a pig and sweats like one too..."

**AIBILEEN**

Which one she want a get rid of? Them rings or the husband? Skeeter chuckles and shrugs her shoulders.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Tell her a vinegar and Pine-Sol soak. Then let it set in the sun a bit.  
Skeeter writes this down.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Bout an hour. Let it dry. Skeeter keeps writing. Aibileen notices something outside. Hilly walks into the Leefolt backyard with her son, BILLY, perched on her hip.

A CONTRACTOR, 30s, follows holding a set of plans. Skeeter turns to the open window. It's already started to sprinkle outside.

**HILLY**

Build it just like the one at my house, right against the garage. The contractor nods. Lightning strikes, thunder cracks.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Oh, mercy! Hilly is off and running with Billy. Skeeter seizes the moment.

**SKEETER**

Aibileen, do you ever wish you could...change things? Aibileen turns slowly from the window.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I mean, all that talk yesterday and now with what Hilly's up to. Aibileen's eyes fall to the floor.

32.

**AIBILEEN**

Everthing's fine.

**SKEETER**

My momma fired Constantine. Thank you for telling me that.

**AIBILEEN**

I never tolt you that! Aibileen jumps up as another crack of thunder sounds out.

**SKEETER**

Aibileen, I have an idea...Something I want to write about...But I need your help. Skeeter rises.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I want to interview you...about what it is like to work as a maid. Aibileen stops at the refrigerator, gripping the life out of its handle.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I'd like to do a book of interviews about working for white families. Show what it's like to work for, say...Elizabeth.  
Aibileen begins to perspire. She grabs the counter to steady herself, then moves toward her chair.

**AIBILEEN**

You know what'd happen to me if Miss Leefolt knew I was tellin' stories on her?

**SKEETER**

I was thinking we wouldn't tell her. The other maids will have to keep it secret, too.

**AIBILEEN**

Other maids?

**SKEETER**

I was hoping to get four or five. To really show what it's like in Jackson. To see what y'all get paid, the babies, the bathrooms, the good and the bad.  
Aibileen shakes her head.

**AIBILEEN**

They set my cousin Shinelle's car on fire just cause she went down to the voting station.

33.

**SKEETER**

A book has never been written like this, Aibileen.

**AIBILEEN**

`Cause they's a reason. I do this with you, I might as well burn my own house down.  
Bam! The front door slams shut.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME (INTERCUT) - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

Soaking wet, Elizabeth and her husband, RALEIGH, 25, stand

toe to toe.

**RALEIGH**

I put up with the new clothes and all the damn trips to New Orleans, but this takes the goddamn cake!

**ELIZABETH**

It'll confuse Mae Mobley if she sees Aibileen going inside. And we can't risk her health.

**KITCHEN:**

Aibileen hears Mae Mobley crying, but she is frozen.

**LIVING ROOM:**

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

Hilly spoke to the Surgeon General! She also said it'll add value to our home!

**RALEIGH**

Great! Mae Mobley can just go to college in that bathroom, too.

**ELIZABETH**

Honey, Hilly's covering the cost...and said you can just do William's taxes to pay her back.

**RALEIGH**

We don't take orders from the Holbrooks!

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Raleigh storms in and is surprised to see Skeeter.

**RALEIGH**

Skeeter? How you doing?

**SKEETER**

Fine.

34.

**RALEIGH**

Fix me a sandwich, Aibileen.  
Raleigh storms out as Elizabeth charges into the kitchen.

**ELIZABETH**

Aibileen, Mae Mobley's crying her  
eyes out!  
Aibileen runs off. Elizabeth sees Skeeter and tries to  
compose herself.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

Skeeter...Hello. I'm sorry but I  
think it's best if you leave now.  
Skeeter gathers her things.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

And...I don't think this Miss Myrna  
thing is gonna work out with  
Aibileen.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - DEN - LATER THAT DAY**

The storm has escalated. The Holbrook house is without  
power. Hilly runs around lighting candles.  
Missus Walters lies on the couch while Minny fans her with a  
newspaper.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

You're making it a lot hotter  
flapping your arm like that.  
Minny stops and begins squirming with discomfort. Missus  
Walters notices her looking out to the garage bathroom.  
Lightning strikes. Leaves blow across the yard. Hilly plops  
down in a chair with a candle.

**HILLY**

That should do it. Minny, go get  
me and Momma some iced tea.  
Minny hesitates. She gulps.

**MINNY**

Uh...Miss Hilly?

**HILLY**

Yes.

**MINNY**

Never mind.  
As Minny turns, Missus Walters calls out to her.



**MISSUS WALTERS**

You go on ahead and use the guest bath, Minny. It's okay.

**HILLY**

Oh, for crying out loud. It's just a little rain. She can go get an umbrella up in William's Study!

**MISSUS WALTERS**

I believe she was working for me before you dragged us both here. Minny looks outside just as wind slams an aluminum lawn chair against the garage bathroom. Boom! Another crash of thunder. Large hail stones begin falling in the yard.

**MINNY**

I'm gone get your tea.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - BATHROOM - SECONDS LATER**

Minny sneaks into the guest bath with a candle and shuts the door. She carefully lowers the seat and sits. Relief spreads across her face. There's a knock on the door. She freezes.

**HILLY (O.C.)**

Minny?  
Minny panics, staying completely quiet.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE (INTERCUT) - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Hilly leans into the bathroom door.

**HILLY**

MINNYYYYY, are you in there?

**MINNY**

Yes, ma'am...

**HILLY**

Are you sitting down?  
Minny gets up quickly and flushes the toilet. Hilly beats on

the door.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

**GET OFF OF MY TOILET!!!**

Outside the house, an eerie, groaning sound, much like a freight train, intensifies.

house,  
The top of a huge tree snaps off and falls against the shattering a window.

**36.**

Minnie crouches down and covers her head. A draft sucks the candle's flame toward the bottom of the door.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - MAE MOBLEY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Aibileen sits with Mae Mobley against an interior wall, holding a mattress on top of them and humming in her ear.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

On top a Minny losin' her tenth  
job, eighteen people died in  
Jackson that day. Ten white.  
Eight black.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - SAME TIME**

Skeeter stands in her backyard facing Jackson. Cool winds head toward the dark, swirling horizon.  
In the distance, lightning strikes.

**EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - FRONT PORCH - SAME TIME**

Celia leans on the porch railing, gazing helplessly as the relentless hail storm pummels her two rosebushes.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

God don't pay no mind to color or  
class once he sets a tornado loose.  
Within seconds, the rose blossoms are gone.

**INT/EXT. BATHROOM/BACKYARD (INTERCUT) - THREE MONTHS LATER**

in  
Aibileen uses the newly completed bathroom Hilly has built  
the garage. The walls consist of unpainted plywood with a  
small window hugging the ceiling.  
Beads of sweat glisten on Aibileen's forehead under a single  
bulb hanging above.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Soon after, that bitter seed inside  
of me had sprout and was growing  
fast...

Well into her second pregnancy, Elizabeth exits the house  
with Mae Mobley at her side. She wears an awful, homemade  
maternity dress.

**ELIZABETH**

Hurry, Aibileen. Mae Mobley's up,  
and I'm off to the doctor.  
Aibileen reaches behind and flushes the toilet. Mae Mobley  
gets excited and points to the garage bathroom.

**37.**

**MAE MOBLEY**

Aibee bafroom, Momma!  
Mae Mobley walks toward the bathroom and calls out.

**MAE MOBLEY (CONT'D)**

Aibee?  
Elizabeth grabs her and forces her down on the back step.

**ELIZABETH**

No!

**AIBILEEN**

Be right there, Baby Girl.  
Aibileen pulls up her panty-hose.

**EXT. BUS STOP - LATER THAT AFTERNOON**

Aibileen waits with YULE MAY, 45, as well as other maids and  
black males at a bus stop. Yule May is tall, pretty and  
graceful. Her hair is pulled tightly into a bun.  
Skeeter walks down the sidewalk toward them. She and  
Aibileen catch eyes. Skeeter waves.  
Yule May inches away from Aibileen. One BLACK MAN in

particular looks with concern as Skeeter walks up.

**SKEETER**

Afternoon, Aibileen.  
Aibileen nods nervously, looking at the other domestics.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Can I talk to you?  
A bus pulls up.

**AIBILEEN**

You got some "Miss Myrna" questions  
for me?

**SKEETER**

No.  
Yule May and others board. Skeeter grabs Aibileen's arm.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Please.  
Aibileen signals to Yule May to go on ahead without her.

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.  
The bus pulls away.

**38.**

**SKEETER**

Please let me interview you. I  
know it's scary, but I really  
believe this has to be done. We'll  
be careful.

**AIBILEEN**

This already ain't careful, Miss  
Skeeter. You not knowing that is  
what scares me most. I'm sorry.  
Skeeter hands Aibileen a piece of paper with her phone  
number  
written on it. Aibileen turns and walks off down the  
sidewalk.

**EXT. BUS STOP - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Dark outside, Aibileen approaches another, more integrated  
bus stop.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

I know pretty well what happens if the white ladies found out we was writing about them. Womens, they ain't like men. Women don't beat you with a stick. Naw, they like to keep they hands clean. Got a shiny set a tools they use, sharp as witches' fingernails.

As Aibileen ambles toward a bench, TWO WHITE WOMEN in nurse uniforms push in front of her and sit.

**INT. MISSISSIPPI LAW LIBRARY - NEXT MORNING**

Skeeter sits at a long table surrounded by books piled high as if to provide a shield of sorts. Lying before her, is an old, thin, onionskin booklet curling at the edges. It's titled:

"Compilation of Jim Crow Laws of the South"  
Skeeter opens the booklet and begins reading.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Any person printing, publishing or circulating written matter urging for public acceptance of social equality between whites and negroes is subject to imprisonment.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Aibileen sits at a table wearing a nightgown. She carefully combs and styles her wig for work in the morning. Her real hair is bound tightly in dozens of tightly bound nubs.

**39.**

The rotary wall phone rings. Aibileen hangs the wig on her chair and answers.

**INT. MINNY'S HOUSE (INTERCUT) - HALLWAY - SAME TIME**

Mিনny is hysterical.

**MINNY**

Oh, Aibileen! I went and did it  
now!  
Minnie wraps a hand up in the phone cord.

**MINNIE (CONT'D)**

Miss Hilly been tellin' everybody in  
town I stole a candelabra! That's  
why I can't get no job.

**AIBILEEN**

Everybody know you honest, Minnie.

**MINNIE**

Oh, but I got her back...I did  
something awful, Aibileen.

**AIBILEEN**

What you did?!

**EXT. HOLBROOK HOUSE (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

Minnie stands on Hilly's porch holding a chocolate pie.

**MINNIE (O.S.)**

I cain't tell! I ain't tellin'  
nobody! I done a terrible awful  
thing to that woman. And now she  
knows what I did!

Hilly answers the door and snarls at Minnie. Minnie presents  
the pie and says "I am sorry."  
Hilly waves Minnie inside.

**INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

**MINNIE**

She got what she deserve, Aibileen.  
But, now I ain't gone never get no  
work again...Leroy gone kill me.  
Minnie's husband, LEROY, 40, approaches behind Minnie. Minnie  
slowly turns...

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Aibileen hears a loud slap and Minnie's phone dropping to the  
floor. Yelling and screaming follows.

40.

**AIBILEEN**

Minnie!  
She can't bear to listen and hangs up the phone. She sees Skeeter's phone number taped to the wall. Aibileen's breath becomes heavy. Anger wells inside her. She picks up the phone again and begins to dial.

**EXT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - NEXT NIGHT - DUSK**

Wearing a black scarf over her hair and clutching her red satchel, Skeeter approaches a small, one-story wood structure. White paint peels, hydrangeas fill the yard. Skeeter spies an old pickup truck parked on the side of Aibileen's house, completely covered in years of dust. Skeeter checks over her shoulder several times. The porch steps creak under her big feet. Aibileen quickly opens the door and waves her inside.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Aibileen wears the same yellow dress she wore in the first scene.

**SKEETER**

I parked way up on State Street and caught a cab here like you asked.

**AIBILEEN**

Got dropped two streets over?  
Skeeter nods.

**SKEETER**

Aibileen, I now know it's against the law for us to meet like this. Skeeter stares Aibileen up and down. Aibileen self-consciously flattens out her dress.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I've never seen you out of uniform before. You look nice, Aibileen.

**AIBILEEN**

Thank you.

a

Aibileen motions for Skeeter to sit on a narrow sofa behind coffee table covered in hand-tatted lace. A tray holds a teapot, two cups that don't match and cookies resting on folded napkins. As Aibileen pours the tea, her hand shakes.

41.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

I'm sorry. I've never had a white person in my house before. Skeeter sips her tea.

**SKEETER**

I've never been in a colored person's home before. I think we're both doing great. This tea is really nice. Aibileen watches as Skeeter takes a bite of the cookie.

**AIBILEEN**

Miss Skeeter, What if...What if you don't like what I got to say? About white peoples?

**SKEETER**

I...this isn't about my opinion. It doesn't matter how I feel.

**AIBILEEN**

You gone have to change my name. Mine, Miss Leefolt's, everybody's.

**SKEETER**

Everybody? So, you know other maids who might be interested? Aibileen is quiet for a moment. She shakes her head.

**AIBILEEN**

It gone be hard.

**SKEETER**

What about Minny?

**AIBILEEN**

Minny got her some stories, sho nuff. But, she ain't real keen on talking to white peoples right now.



**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

We continue with the interview seen on page one.

**SKEETER**

What does it feel like, to raise a white child when your own child's at home, being...looked after by somebody else?

**AIBILEEN**

It feel...Uh.  
Aibileen glances up to the framed picture of Treelore.

**SKEETER**

Is that your son?

**42.**

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am. He dead two years now.  
Got run over at the lumber yard.  
Lungs were crushed.

**SKEETER**

I'm so sorry. That's horrible.  
And, Aibileen, you don't have to call me "ma'am." Not here anyway.  
Aibileen nods. Skeeter stares at her list of questions.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Do you want to talk about the bathroom? Or, about Elizab--Miss Leefolt? Anything about the way she pays you? Has she ever yelled at you in front of Mae Mobley?  
Aibileen shakes her head.

**AIBILEEN**

I'm sorry, I-  
Aibileen covers her mouth with her hand. Skeeter becomes disgusted with herself.

**SKEETER**

No, I am.  
She pulls out a stack of Miss Myrna letters.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Let's just do a couple of Miss Myrna letters, and I'll run on...

**AIBILEEN**

I thought I might write my stories down and read them to you.

**SKEETER**

Well, sure I guess.

**AIBILEEN**

It no different than writing down my prayers.

**SKEETER**

You don't say your prayers aloud?

**AIBILEEN**

Prayer like electricity. It keep life going. Writing it down make it more powerful. Lot a ailing, sick peoples in this town.

**SKEETER**

I'm sure.

**AIBILEEN**

I didn't get a chance to pray for Treelore.

**43.**

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

God took him fast `cause he didn't want to argue with me. He was just twenty-four years old. The best part of a person's life.

**SKEETER**

Oh, Aibileen.

**AIBILEEN**

But he'd like we's doing this. He always said we gone have a writer in the family one day...After my prayers last night, I got some stories down too.

Skeeter nods. Aibileen opens her notebook and reads.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

My first white baby to ever look after was named Alton Carrington Speers. It was 1938, and I'd just turned fourteen years old. Daddy had left us, so I dropped out a school to help momma with the bills.

**INT. MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH - MORNING**

the  
A congregation of three hundred stand singing lively with  
large choir.

Aibileen stands next to Yule May and is whispering in her ear. Yule suddenly leans back, shocked, shaking her head "no."

Minnie watches from two pews back. Her curiosity is peaked.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Alton's momma died a lung disease.  
I loved that baby, and he loved me.  
That's when I learned I could make  
children feel proud of themselves.

**INT. HARPER AND ROW PUBLISHING - OFFICE - NEW YORK**

Miss Stein sits at her desk reading Aibileen's stories.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Alton used to always be asking me  
how come I's black...

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

**AIBILEEN**

It just ate him up, so one time I  
told him it cause I drank too much  
coffee. Oh, law, you should a seen  
his face.

**44.**

Skeeter laughs as she writes down Aibileen's story.

**SKEETER**

This is great. You have no idea how much I appreciate this...But I just have to ask. What changed your mind?

**AIBILEEN**

**(WITHOUT PAUSE)**

Miss Hilly Holbrook.

**INT. JUNIOR LEAGUE HEADQUARTERS - MORNING**

Hilly stands at a podium banging a gavel. The pleats of her navy blue sailor's number fan out like an accordion. A room full of JUNIOR LEAGUE MEMBERS sits up and quiets down.

Half the girls are pregnant and most all drink TAB and are smoking. Skeeter sits in the back next to Elizabeth.

**HILLY**

We're running behind on our "coat drive," girls. So hurry up and clean out those closets...But our Christmas Benefit, however, is right on schedule as y'all have already filled all our baked goods raffle slots.

The girls applaud, turning to each other with praise.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Y'all think we can put a dent in the African Children's hunger this year?

More applause. Those who aren't pregnant, stand. Hilly beams. Elizabeth nudges Skeeter out of her chair.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Now for some exciting news...I wanted y'all to be the first to know...My William is seeking election to the State Senate this November!

Now, even the pregnant women stand. Elizabeth grabs Skeeter's arm and pulls herself up.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

He's runnin' on a platform of health. Protecting our children. Protecting our way of life. So, I,

with William, have drafted The Home Health Sanitation Initiative. This sets off a room of whispers.

45.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Skeeter, when can we expect to see the initiative in the newsletter? I gave it to you a month ago. Everyone turns to Skeeter. Elizabeth panics.

**ELIZABETH**

I gave that to you myself!

**SKEETER**

I, ah...Well, I-

**HILLY**

Would you please stand, Skeeter? As Skeeter rises, several women shake their heads.

**SKEETER**

I'll have it in there soon. Skeeter glances at the initiative tucked in her satchel.

**EXT. LEAGUE HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - LATER THAT DAY**

Skeeter turns a corner and sees Hilly leaning on her car.

**SKEETER**

Hilly? Do you need a ride? Hilly shakes her head with little emotion.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I'm sorry about the newsletter. Hilly nods. A soft smile begins to form.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

With Momma being sick and- Hilly erupts with excitement.

**HILLY**

He's coming! Oh, Skeeter, he's definitely coming this time. This Saturday night.

**SKEETER**

Oh, Hilly, he's cancelled twice before. Maybe it's a sign.

**HILLY**

Don't you dare say that!

**SKEETER**

You know I won't be his type.  
Hilly grabs Skeeter by the shoulders.

**46.**

**HILLY**

It's your time, Skeeter. And  
damnit, I'm not going to let you  
miss this just because your mother  
convinced you you're not good  
enough for somebody like him.

**INT. MINNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

Minny is again wearing her maid's uniform. She puts two plates of food down on the kitchen table. She sits next to her daughter, SUGAR, 15. Sugar wears a brand-spanking-new maids's uniform.

**MINNY**

Eat up, Girl. Miss Woodra's like  
to not feed ya on try-out day.  
Sugar takes a bite of toast.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

I still say you're too young to be  
waitin' on white peoples...Now,  
Sugar, I want you to listen to me,  
and you listen to me good.  
Minny grabs Sugar's face and looks her right in the eyes.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

These are the rules for working in  
a white lady's house.  
Sugar jerks her face away and sticks her lip out.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Rule Number One: Don't you ever let  
White Lady find you sittin' on her  
toilet.  
Sugar nods.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Number Two: You keep your nose out of White Lady's problems, and don't cry to her with yours. White people ain't your friends.

**EXT. RURAL BUS STOP - LATER THAT MORNING**

Mিনny steps off a bus and walks down an old country road.

**MINNY (V.O.)**

Number Three: When you're cooking white food, taste it with a different spoon. They see you put the tasting spoon back in the pot, might as well throw it all out. Spoon, too.

47.

**EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - LATER**

Mিনny approaches the Foote estate. She stops just short of stairs leading up to the front porch.

**MINNY (V.O.)**

Four: You use the same cup, same fork, same plate every day. Minny takes her first step on the stairs.

**MINNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

Five: Don't hit her kids. White people do they own spanking. Minny slowly raises her hand to knock on the front door.

**MINNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

Six: No sass-mouthing! Minny knocks.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

**(TO HERSELF)**

Number six, Minny. Number six. The door flies open. Celia Foote answers. She's covered in tight pink clothes. Flour covers her face and hair.

**CELIA**

Hey there! I'm Celia Rae Foote.  
Aibileen said you'd be on time.  
Minnie looks down disapprovingly to Celia's bare feet.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

Can I get you a cold Coca-Cola?

**MINNY**

No, thank you. I'm Minny  
Jackson... You...cooking  
something?

**CELIA**

One of those upsidedown cakes from  
the magazine. It ain't workin' out  
too good. Come on in.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Minnie enters behind Celia gawking at the flour massacre.

**MINNY**

What in the hell-  
Minnie catches herself.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

**(TO HERSELF)**

Tuck it in, Minny. Tuck it in.

**48.**

**CELIA**

I guess I have some learnin' to do.

**MINNY**

**(STUPID SMILE)**

You sure do.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Minnie and Celia enter a huge dining room. Minny gawks at a  
dusty mahogany table surrounded by twelve chairs.

**CELIA**



Johnny's momma wouldn't let me decorate a thing. If I had my way, this house would have wall to wall white carpet with gold trim and none of this old stuff.  
Minnie spies a framed battle-worn Confederate flag complete with bullet holes.

**MINNIE**

Where you from?  
Celia lowers her head in shame...

**CELIA**

Sugar Ditch. It's near Memphis.

**MINNIE**

I know Sugar Ditch. My cousin live there.  
Celia changes the subject.

**CELIA**

Let's go meet Oscar!  
Celia grabs Minnie's hand. Annoyed, Minnie pulls it away.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Minnie stands at the base of a massive, stuffed Grizzly bear. It clears the twelve-foot ceiling by an inch.

**CELIA**

Johnny's granddaddy shot him up in Montana back in 1910 with Teddy Roosevelt.  
Celia points to fifteen guns mounted behind Oscar.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

We got five bedrooms and bathrooms here in the main house. The pool house has two more beds and baths.

**49.**

**MINNIE**

When you gone have some chillins, start fillin' up all these beds?  
Celia swallows hard. She places her hand on her stomach.

**CELIA**

I'm pregnant now.  
Minnie steps back and surveys Celia.

**MINNIE**

Gone be eatin' for two. Double the  
cookin'.  
Celia slumps her shoulders as she looks around the house.

**CELIA**

I know it's an awful lot to do.  
Five other maids have already  
turned me down...Can I at least  
give you some bus money?

**MINNIE**

When you hear me say I don't wanna  
clean this house?

**CELIA**

What? So...You'll do it?!  
Before Minnie can nod. Celia throws her arms around her.  
Minnie backs away.

**MINNIE**

No huggin', now. No huggin'.

**CELIA**

I'm sorry. This is my first time  
hiring a maid.

**MINNIE**

We got to talk about some things  
first. I work Sunday through  
Friday.  
Celia bites her pinky nail.

**CELIA**

You can't come at all on weekends.

**MINNIE**

Okay. What time you want me here?

**CELIA**

After eight, and you have to leave  
at four.

**MINNIE**

Okay. Now what your husband say  
you can pay?  
Celia looks away.

**CELIA**

Johnny doesn't know I'm bringing in help.

**MINNY**

And what's Mr. Johnny gone do if he comes home and finds a colored woman up in his kitchen?

**CELIA**

It's not that I'd be fibbing. I just want him to think I can do this on my own...I need some help `til I get the hang of it. I need a maid.

**MINNY**

A course you do. Last one done got shot in the head.  
Minny sniffs the air.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Miss Celia, I think you done burned up yo cake.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER**

Celia grabs a rag off the sink and jerks the cake out of the oven.

**CELIA**

Oww! Dawgonit!  
She drops the burnt cake on the floor.

**MINNY**

You can't use no wet towel on a hot pan.  
Minny grabs a dry towel and picks up the cake.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

I'll take this burnt up cake with me so Mister Johnny don't see it.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - MAE MOBLEY'S ROOM - MORNING**

Aibileen removes Mae Mobley's wet cloth diaper on a changing table. Mae Mobley's behind is covered with inflamed diaper rash.

Aibileen shakes her head. Elizabeth enters the room.

**ELIZABETH**

I'm off, Aibileen. Don't forget  
Raleigh wants pot roast tonight.

51.

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.  
Aibileen's eyes narrow.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Skeeter works with a typewriter now. Aibileen, more casually dressed than before, waits for Skeeter to finish typing.

**AIBILEEN**

I reckon I'm ready...to talk about  
Miss Leefolt now.  
Skeeter stops typing and looks up. She nods.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Baby girl don't get her diaper  
changed `til I get there in the  
morning. That's `bout ten hours  
she gots to sit in her mess. I be  
so worried about her on my day off.  
I always come in an hour early on  
Mondays.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Charlotte sits at a table sorting through mail as Skeeter enters and grabs an apple

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Miss Leefolt pregnant again, too.  
And, law, I pray this child turn  
out good. It a lonely road if a  
momma don't think theys child is  
pretty.  
Charlotte glances down disapprovingly at the dingy, huarache

shoes on Skeeter's feet. Skeeter heads for the door.

**CHARLOTTE**

Where are you going, Skeeter?  
Skeeter turns.

**SKEETER**

Bible study.

**CHARLOTTE**

On a Saturday night?

**SKEETER**

Momma, God doesn't care what day of  
the week it is.  
Skeeter walks out the back door as Charlotte shakes her  
head.

52.

**EXT. JOLENE FRENCH'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY**

Hilly, Elizabeth and Jolene French stand with Hilly's  
contractor. He unrolls a set of bathroom plans.  
Hilly and Elizabeth look to Jolene and nod approvingly.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Skeeter's typing slows.

**AIBILEEN**

Miss Leefolt be spending so much  
time keeping up with the society  
ladies, she done forgot the child  
she got now.  
Just then Minny barges through the kitchen back door.

**MINNY**

Aibileen!  
Minny stops cold in her tracks at the sight of Skeeter.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Yule May told me what y'all up to.  
Aibileen nods. Minny's face hardens.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Medgar Evers live five minutes  
away. They blew up his carport

last night. For talking!  
Minnie scowls at Skeeter.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

What makes you think colored people  
need your help? You white. Why  
you care?

**AIBILEEN**

We all working for the same thing.

**MINNY**

**(TO SKEETER)**

Maybe you just want to get her in  
trouble.  
Skeeter is petrified. Her face reddens.

**SKEETER**

I want to show her perspective...so  
people might understand what it's  
like from your side.

**MINNY**

Well it's a real Fourth of July  
picnic.

53.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

It's what we dream a doing all  
weekend long, get back in they  
house to polish the silver. And we  
just love not getting minimum wage  
or Social Security.

**SKEETER**

I know, Minny. Maybe things might

**CHANGE IF-**

**MINNY**

What law's gonna say you gotta be  
nice to your maid? And another  
thing, I don't want my children  
going to school with white kids.  
And I don't care a thing about  
votin.' Only thing black mens get  
elected to is Deacon of the church.

**AIBILEEN**

You don't have to do this, Minny.

**MINNY**

You damn right I don't! You two givin' me the heart palpitations. Minny storms out the back door. Skeeter looks like she might get sick.

**AIBILEEN**

And that was a good mood. Minny immediately storms back in the kitchen.

**MINNY**

All right...I'm gone do it. I just want to make sure you know this ain't no game we're playing here. Skeeter nods, trembling as Minny slides a chair in the middle of the kitchen and sits.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

**(TO SKEETER)**

Slide your chair out from under that table and face me. I want to see you square on at all times. Still trembling, Skeeter slides her chair from the table and just sits there staring at Minny.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

I's got to come up with your questions, too?!

**SKEETER**

Let's begin...begin with...with where you were born. Aibileen grabs her notebook and begins writing.

**54.**

**MINNY**

Belzoni, Mississippi on my great-auntie's sofa. Next!

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - HOURS LATER**

Minny talks a mile a minute. Aibileen continues writing.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Once Minny got to talking `bout  
food, she liked to never stop...

**MINNY**

I put the green beans in first,  
then I go on and get the pork chops  
going cause, mmm-mmm, I like my  
chops hot out the pan.

Just as Aibileen fills the first notebook, Skeeter hands her  
another from her satchel.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

But when she got to talking about  
the white ladies, it took all  
night...

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SUNRISE**

The first signs of morning sun filter into the kitchen.

**MINNY**

"Oh, Minny, I'm gone give you a  
week paid vacation." Now, I ain't  
had no paid vacation in my life. A  
week later, I come back and they'd  
moved to Mobile. "Miss Lazy  
Fingers" scared I'd find a new job  
before she moved...

Minny spins around to Aibileen with sudden realization...

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

We gots to get more maids!  
Minny stands. Skeeter's eyes widen with hope.

**AIBILEEN**

I know, but it hard, Minny.  
Mind racing, Minny flies out the door without a word.  
Aibileen turns to Skeeter.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

You gone and done it now.

55.

**INT. HARPER AND ROW PUBLISHING - OFFICE - NEW YORK - DAY**



Miss Stein discusses Aibileen and Minny's stories with Skeeter on the phone.

**MISS STEIN**

I like this "Sarah Ross." She can kvetch but not complain too much.

**INT- PHELAN PLANTATION (INTERCUT) - PANTRY**

Skeeter nods rapidly as if she knows what "kvetch" means.

**MISS STEIN**

And this "Bertha"...she's got chutzpah. I'll give her that.

**SKEETER**

So...you liked it?

**MISS STEIN**

Eugenia, Martin Luther King just invited the country to march with him in D.C. this August. This many negroes and whites haven't worked together since "Gone with the Wind."

**SKEETER**

Does this mean you'll publish it?

**MISS STEIN**

I never said that. My advice is to write it fast before this civil rights thing blows over. I need it by New Year's, and don't send me anything more until you have twelve maids.

**SKEETER**

Twelve?

**MISS STEIN**

At least.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT**

Minny, Aibileen and Skeeter sit at the kitchen table.

**MINNY**

Aibileen and I done asked everybody

we know. Thirty-one maids.  
Everybody too scared, think we  
crazy...

**SKEETER**

Then we might as well stop!

56.

**MINNY**

I got plenty a stories, Miss  
Skeeter. Just write `em down and  
invent a maid that said it. We  
already making up everybody's name.  
Make up the maids, too.  
Skeeter jumps up from her chair.

**SKEETER**

We can't do that!  
Aibileen and Minny lean back.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I mean...I would never do that. It  
wouldn't be real. It's wrong.

**AIBILEEN**

Don't give up on us, Miss Skeeter.  
Skeeter softens and sits back down.

**SKEETER**

I'm sorry. Thank you both for  
trying.

**INT. JACKSON JOURNAL NEWSPAPER - OFFICE - DAY**

Skeeter delivers the "Miss Myrna" columns to the  
receptionist, who hands her back a paycheck.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - KITCHEN**

Celia and Minny stand at a fried chicken assembly line.

**MINNY**

What can you cook?  
Minny dips pieces chicken in an egg wash, then drops them in  
a paper bag. A puff of flour rises out of the bag.

**CELIA**

I can cook corn pone, boil  
potatoes, and do grits.  
Minnie bursts out laughing.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

We didn't have electric current  
where I was raised.

**MINNIE**

Well, I reckon if there's anything  
you ought to know `bout cooking...  
Minnie holds up a can of Crisco.

57.

**MINNIE (CONT'D)**

It's this. The most important  
invention since they put mayonnaise  
in a jar. You don't even know the  
things you can do with this here  
can.

Celia peers into the skillet as Minnie spoons out a mound of  
Crisco.

**CELIA**

How pretty. Looks like frosting.  
Minnie rolls her eyes and hands Celia the bag of Chicken.

**MINNIE**

Shake that.  
Celia starts shaking the bag.

**CELIA**

This is fun!

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - KITCHEN - LATER**

Minnie sits down at the table with a plate of chicken. Celia  
sits down next to her.

**CELIA**

Looks so good! I'm starved.  
Aggravated, Minnie stands.

**MINNIE**

You supposed to eat in the dining

room, Miss Celia. That how it works.  
Minnie grabs Celia's plate.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Here, I'll take your plate in the dinin' room for ya. Want tea?

**CELIA**

I'm fine right here, Minny.  
Minnie sits back down with a sigh. Celia touches her arm.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

I'm real grateful you're here.

**MINNY**

Miss Celia, you got a lot more to be grateful for than me.  
A car is heard pulling up in the driveway. Minny panics.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Mister Johnny?!

**58.**

**CELIA**

Oh, no! Hide!  
Minnie slides down underneath the kitchen table.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

Oh...It's just the florist. Johnny must have sent me flowers.  
Minnie pulls herself up off the floor. She's mad.

**MINNY**

Miss Celia, I ain't playin' around no more! He gone catch me here and shoot me dead right here on this no-wax floor! You gots to tell him. Ain't he wondering how the cooking so good?

**CELIA FOOTE**

You're right. Maybe we ought to burn the chicken a little.  
The doorbell rings. Celia runs off to answer.

**MINNY**

Minnie don't burn chicken.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - KITCHEN - DAY**

Skeeter sits with a towel draped across her shoulders.  
Charlotte, now in an auburn wig, squirts mounds of goo from  
a pink tube onto Skeeter's hair.

**CHARLOTTE**

This is bound to work, Sweetie. It  
even smells expensive.  
She begins twisting Skeeter's hair into gooey spikes.

**SKEETER**

I feel the hope in your fingers.  
Skeeter resembles a papier maché starfish.

**CHARLOTTE**

How can you not know his last name?

**SKEETER**

He's William's cousin. That's all  
I know.

**CHARLOTTE**

That's just so sweet of Hilly.  
Charlotte takes a drag from her cigarette, then lifts up a  
silver machine complete with power cord and rubber hose.

**SKEETER**

What is that?!

59.

**CHARLOTTE**

The Shinolator! It cost eleven  
dollars. I'm a good mother.  
Charlotte puts a shower cap device on Skeeter's head and  
reads from the Shinolator manual.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

"The Miracle Straitening Cap" must  
remain on the head for two hours."

**SKEETER**

Two hours?!  
Charlotte flips a switch and takes another drag. The machine  
groans to life. Skeeter's cap inflates.

**CHARLOTTE**

I'll have Pascagoula bring you a magazine.  
Skeeter snatches her mother's cigarette and takes a drag.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter sits under the Shinolator buried in a magazine.  
Pascagoula enters and sets down a glass of tea.

**SKEETER**

Thanks, Constantine. Do you think this dress is cute?  
Skeeter holds the magazine up to Pascagoula. Only now does she realize what she's said and done.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I'm sorry. Thanks, Pascagoula.  
Pascagoula nods and starts to walk away then turns.

**PASCAGOLUA**

I knew Constantine. She was a mighty fine woman.

**INT. PHELEN PLANTATION - SKEETER'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT DAY**

The Shinolator was a success. Skeeter's hair is straight, silky and beautiful.

**SKEETER**

Holy shit.

**CHARLOTTE**

You've shrunk five inches. You'll be able to wear heels tonight.  
Charlotte looks down to the huarache shoes on Skeeter's feet and rushes to the closet.

**60.**

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

You're not leaving this house in those awful, Mexican, man shoes.  
Charlotte pulls out a dress and pair of heels.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

What time is he picking you up?

**SKEETER**

He's meeting me at Hilly's. Can I take the Cadillac?

**CHARLOTTE**

We promised Carlton the Cadillac tonight. So, William's cousin will just have to come get you himself.

**SKEETER**

I'll take the truck.

**CHARLOTTE**

It's hooked to the motor grader.

**SKEETER**

I'll drive slow.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - FIELD - LATER THAT AFTERNOON**

Skeeter pulls away in a rusted 1941 Chevy farm truck with a huge motor grader attached. Charlotte runs next to the truck. Her wig is askew.

**CHARLOTTE**

Don't mope. Remember to smile!  
Skeeter floors it. Charlotte runs faster.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

And, don't sit like some squaw  
Indian. Cross! Your! Ankles!  
Skeeter leaves her mother in a cloud of dust.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

**(SHOUTING)**

I love you!

**INT. FARM TRUCK - COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER**

Chunks of mud fly off the tires. The June sun has set the truck's interior at a stubborn 115 degrees. Skeeter has no choice but to lower her window. The Shinolator meets its match. A mangy, STRAY CAT suddenly jumps out in the road. When towing 10,000 pounds of farm equipment, slowing down quickly

isn't an option.

**61.**

A loud thud sounds out from the truck's grill.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - PARLOR - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Hilly, her husband, WILLIAM, and Skeeter's date, STUART WHITWORTH, drink high balls and eat cheese in the Holbrook parlor. Gold swag curtains hang on the windows. Balding and pudgy, only William's family money once made him a desirable bachelor. Stuart, on the other hand, is very handsome, the "Marlboro Man" in a well-tailored suit. Yule May (who we met earlier at church with Aibileen) now works for Hilly. She clears empty glasses.

**WILLIAM**

With your daddy's endorsement, I  
can win that Senate seat.  
Stuart feigns interest.

**STUART**

I'll talk to him.  
Ice slams against Stuart's teeth as he downs his drink.  
Hilly pats William's leg then turns with concern to a  
grandfather clock announcing half past the hour.  
The front door flies open. Skeeter enters completely out of  
breath and sweaty. Her HAIR HAS TRIPLED IN SIZE. She waves.

**SKEETER**

Hey.  
As Hilly races toward Skeeter, William and Stuart stand.  
Stuart is as tall as he is handsome.

**HILLY**

Boys, we'll be right back. Y'all  
talk about quarterbacks or  
something. Yule May, get Miss  
Skeeter a Coca Cola.  
Yule May runs off. Hilly pulls Skeeter down the hall.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter sits on the toilet downing a Coca-Cola. Hilly twists  
the last of Skeeter's hair into giant rollers.



**HILLY**

Skeeter, you don't even have on  
lipstick!  
Skeeter dabs her armpits.

**62.**

**SKEETER**

It was so goddamn awful. I hit a  
cat.  
Hilly sprays Final Net.

**HILLY**

Well...What do you think of him?  
Skeeter applies lipstick. Hilly removes the rollers.

**SKEETER**

He looks handsome.  
Skeeter stands up and does a twirl for Hilly.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

All right, give it to me. One to  
ten?  
Hilly sprays Skeeter with perfume and stands back.

**HILLY**

Seven.

**SKEETER**

Really?! Seven?  
Hilly nods, lets out a little squeal.

**HILLY**

Honey, you're beautiful. Just go  
on out there...you're gonna do  
great. It's your time, Skeeter. I  
just know it.  
Hilly hugs Skeeter.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Hilly, William, Stuart and Skeeter sit at a round table  
adorned with white linens, silver and fine china.  
The room buzzes with Jackson's elite all trying to be  
noticed  
as a JAZZ QUARTET plays softly in a corner.  
A WAITER approaches. Stuart leans into Skeeter without  
making eye contact.

**STUART**

You want a drink?

**SKEETER**

Just water, please.

**STUART**

**(TO WAITER)**

Double Old Kentucky straight...with  
a water back...Make that two backs.

**63.**

**SKEETER**

THANKS?! So...you went to Alabama?  
Stuart nods. Hilly rolls her eyes.

**HILLY**

"Roll Tide." We still love him.  
Hilly pinches Stuart on the cheek.

**SKEETER**

Now you're in the oil business.  
Hilly says you're a rigsite leader.

**STUART**

The money's good. If that's what  
you really want to know.

**SKEETER**

That's not what I-  
Skeeter and Hilly watch as Stuart's and William's eyes fix

on

the front of the restaurant.  
Celia and Johnny have entered. Celia wears a tight green  
dress and the reddest lipstick ever put in a tube.

**STUART**

Isn't that your old boyfriend,  
Hilly? Johnny Foote?  
Hilly scowls.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

Who's his girl? Lord, she's hotter  
than Delta asphalt.  
Celia spots Hilly and gives a self-conscious wave.

**HILLY**

William! The Lieutenant Governor  
just walked in.  
Hilly jumps up and pulls William away. The waiter returns  
with Stuart's drink and the water backs.

**STUART**

So, what do you do with your time?

**SKEETER**

I write a...a domestic maintenance  
column for the Jackson Journal.  
Stuart smirks, taking a huge sip of his drink.

**STUART**

You mean housekeeping?  
Skeeter nods and grabs her water.

**64.**

**STUART (CONT'D)**

Jesus, I can't think of anything  
worse than reading a cleaning  
column. Except maybe writing one.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - LOBBY - SAME TIME**

Hilly and William finish shaking hands with the Lieutenant  
Governor. As he walks away, Hilly shouts out.

**HILLY**

We'd love your support on election  
day!  
Celia and Johnny walk up. Hilly stiffens.

**JOHNNY**

Hilly, you look lovely tonight.

**HILLY**

Thank you, Johnny.

**JOHNNY**

William, have you ever met Celia?  
William steps forward and shakes Celia's hand.

**WILLIAM**

Nice to meet you.  
Hilly grabs the crook of William's arm.

**HILLY**

Sweetie, we need to go order our dinners.  
Celia musters up all the courage inside her.

**CELIA FOOTE**

Hilly, did you ever get the messages that I've been calling you?

**HILLY**

I did not.

**CELIA FOOTE**

Well, I would love to help with the benefit. I have a lovely hand if you need invitations addressed.

**HILLY**

"Save the dates" were mailed weeks ago...You didn't get one?  
Celia shakes her head.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Mail's a lot slower way out there in the country, huh?

65.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

**(TO WILLIAM)**

Now, come on, before they run out of Trout Almondine.  
Hilly pulls William away. Johnny grabs Celia's hand.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

**STUART**

Sounds like a ploy to find a husband...becoming an expert on keeping house.

**SKEETER**

Well, you must be a genius. You figured out my whole scheme.  
Skeeter fumes as Hilly and William return and sit.

**HILLY**

What'd we miss?

**STUART**

Isn't that what you women from Ole  
Miss major in? Professional  
husband hunting?

**SKEETER**

I'm sorry, but were you dropped on  
your head as an infant?  
Stuart blinks and then smiles, somewhat impressed. Desperate  
to change the subject, Hilly claps her hands.

**HILLY**

Who? Is? Hungry?  
Skeeter stands.

**SKEETER**

Not me! A kiss from God couldn't  
turn this `frog' into a `prince.'  
Tables begin to stare.

**STUART**

Or you a `princess,' Sweetheart!  
As Skeeter walks away, she purposefully slides her purse  
into  
a glass of water, knocking it over into Stuart's lap.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING**

Hilly and William each have a section of newspaper in their  
face as Yule May clears breakfast dishes. Yule May lingers  
nervously.

**66.**

**HILLY**

Run on, now, Yule May. Got a big  
crowd coming for Miss Leefolt's  
baby shower.

**YULE MAY**

Miss Hilly, I would like to ask you  
and Mister William something.  
Hilly lowers her paper and nods. Yule May begins wrenching  
her hands.

**YULE MAY (CONT'D)**

My twin boys finished high school,  
both on the honor roll...My husband  
and I have been saving for years to  
send them to college.

**HILLY**

Okay...  
Only now does William lower his paper.

**YULE MAY**

We are short seventy-five dollars  
on one of the tuitions.  
William stands up, kisses Hilly on the cheek.

**WILLIAM**

Well, I'm late. Gotta go.  
William leaves.

**HILLY**

Go on...

**YULE MAY**

Now...We're faced with having to  
choose. Which son gets to go...if  
we don't find all the money.  
Hilly draws in a deep breath as does Yule May.

**YULE MAY (CONT'D)**

Would you consider givin' us a  
loan? I'll...I'll work for free  
until it's paid off.

**HILLY**

That's not working for free, Yule  
May. That's paying off a debt.

**YULE MAY**

Yes, ma'am.

**HILLY**

As a Christian, I'm going to do you  
a favor.  
Yule May's eyes widen as a hopeful smile forms.

67.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

God doesn't give charity to those

who are well and able. You need to  
come up with this money on your  
own. You'll thank me one day.  
Hilly raises the paper up to her face as Yule May exits.

**INT. WHITE GROCERY STORE - LATER THAT MORNING**

Minny and Aibileen, in uniform, push carts side by side in  
the grocery store. The white shoppers are dressed casually.  
Other maids in the store (all required to be in uniform  
while shopping) keep quietly to themselves.  
White women smile and chat with one another as they meander  
down the aisles as if the black maids aren't even there.  
Minny suddenly spots Celia in the produce section. She pulls  
Aibileen close as they peer around the corner.

**MINNY**

That's her.  
Aibileen's mouth drops open at the sight of Celia's shorts  
and tight sweater. Celia is having trouble selecting  
produce.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Lord, she's trying to shop.  
Celia walks up to a maid, grabs her, and pulls her to the  
tomatoes. The maid, clearly uncomfortable, selects a tomato,  
hands it to Celia, and scurries away.

**CELIA**

**(SHOUTS OUT)**

Thanks, Doll!

**MINNY**

Miss Celia just don't see `em. The  
lines. Not between us, Miss Hilly,  
nobody.  
Aibileen just nods.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

What you so quiet for? I know you  
got a opinion `bout all this.

**AIBILEEN**

You gone accuse me a  
philosophizing.

**MINNY**

I ain't afraid a no philosophy.

68.

**AIBILEEN**

I don't believe in lines anymore.  
Lines is in our heads `cause people  
like Miss Hilly try to make us  
believe they there.  
Celia squeezes a canteloupe with another scared maid.

**MINNY**

Oh, they there. I know. I get  
punished for crossing them.

**EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER**

Aibileen and Minny continue their conversation while waiting  
with several other maids at a bus stop in front of the  
store.

**AIBILEEN**

Lotta of folk think if you talk  
back to your husband, you crossed a  
line...need to be punished.

**MINNY**

You know I ain't studying no line  
like that.

**AIBILEEN**

Cause it ain't there. `Cept in  
Leroy's head. Lines between black  
and white ain't there either.  
Minny and Aibileen watch as Celia exits the store with her  
groceries and prances toward her car.

**MINNY**

So, I ain't crossing no line if I  
tell Miss Celia she ain't good  
enough for Miss Hilly? Tell her  
she ain't in Miss Hilly's league?

**AIBILEEN**

All I'm saying is kindness don't  
have no boundaries.  
Just then, MYRLIE EVERS, 30, (Medgar Evers wife) approaches  
the bus stop with her three Children. SONS, 10 and 3, and a



**DAUGHTER, 8.**

Aibileen and Minny nod as the Evers walk past and sit on a bench.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Law, the Evers children have gotten so big!

**MINNY**

**(QUIETLY)**

Cause they happy. Myrlie got her a good man...And you better not try to say they ain't no line between her Medgar and my Leroy.

**69.**

**AIBILEEN**

No. You got me.  
A bus pulls up and the doors open. Minny, Aibileen and the other maids step aside to let the Evers family board first.

**EXT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER THAT DAY**

baby  
Aibileen has come along to aid Yule May with Elizabeth's shower.

A table is set in the middle of the yard covered in white linens and Hilly's best sliver.  
Hilly's son sits on her lap. The other girls' children wear bathing suits jumping noisily in and out of two plastic

kiddy  
pools.  
Yule May clears cake plates while Aibileen removes crumbs with a sterling crumb scraper.  
Mae Mobley wanders up to the table. Her belly almost looks distended crammed inside last year's one piece.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Mae Mo hungry, Momma.  
Elizabeth turns to Mae Mobley but never gets up.

**ELIZABETH**

She's always hungry.  
All the women laugh except for Skeeter.

**SKEETER**

You know she can hear you,  
Elizabeth?  
Elizabeth looks down to her plate. Aibileen sets down the  
scraper and kneels down to Mae Mobley.

**AIBILEEN**

I'm on cut you some cake, Baby.

**ELIZABETH**

Aibileen, we gave that scraper to  
Hilly and William for their wedding  
present. Chantilly!

**AIBILEEN**

It so pretty.  
Hilly begins bouncing William Jr. on her knee.

**HILLY**

Aibileen, are you enjoying your new  
bathroom over at Elizabeth's?  
Hilly nods with a tight smile and glances to the ground at  
Skeeter's red satchel.

70.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Nice to have your own, isn't it?

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.

**HILLY**

Separate but equal. That's what  
Ross Barnett says, and you can't  
argue with the Governor.

**SKEETER**

Not in Mississippi. Birthplace of  
modern day government.  
Hilly narrows her eyes at Skeeter and turns to Aibileen.

**HILLY**

Aibileen, did you know that me and  
Mister Holbrook arranged for that  
bathroom? Sent the boys over and  
the equipment, too.  
Hilly stays on Aibileen, waiting for her to say something.  
Skeeter fumes, hoping Aibileen doesn't say it.

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am...And I thank you.  
Hilly smiles and nods.

**HILLY**

Well...You. Are. Welcome.  
Hilly shoots Skeeter a last look. William Jr. leans into  
Hilly and hugs her.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

One thing I got to say about Miss  
Hilly, she love her children.  
Always tellin' them they smart and  
beautiful. Can't go more than ten  
minutes without givin' one a kiss.  
Hilly kisses her son gently.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

And, law, do they love her back.  
When she starts up on me, I just  
try and think a my sweet Treelore  
and how much he loved me. That  
kind a love makes me cry. Even  
when it going to Miss Hilly.  
Hilly again glances to the red satchel, staring quizzically  
at the worn booklet of The Jim Crow laws sticking out.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY**

Yule May washes dishes as the women are heard saying their  
"good-byes" on the street. Skeeter slips into the kitchen.

71.

**YULE MAY**

May I get you something?

**SKEETER**

No, thanks...

**(HUSHED)**

Yule May, I wanted to talk to you.  
Yule May turns off the sink faucet making sure Hilly is  
still  
cackling out on the street.

**YULE MAY**

I know what you want to ask, Miss  
Skeeter. Aibileen and Minny

already did.  
Yule May closes the kitchen door.

**YULE MAY (CONT'D)**

I'm trying to get my boys off to college. It's worthwhile what y'all doing, but my boys are worth more.

**SKEETER**

I understand.

**HILLY (O.C.)**

What do you "understand," Skeeter?  
Skeeter and Yule May turn to find Hilly standing in the swinging door leading into the dining room.

**SKEETER**

Ah...Yule May was just telling me how excited she was that her boys were going to go to college.

**HILLY**

Is that true, Yule May?

**YULE MAY**

Yes, Ma'am.  
Skeeter notices that Hilly is holding the booklet of Jim  
Crow laws in her hand.

**HILLY**

Did you also ask Miss Skeeter if you could borrow money?

**SKEETER**

Of course not, Hilly!  
Hilly approaches Skeeter.

**HILLY**

Skeeter, I'm starting to think you're intentionally not putting my initiative in the newsletter.  
Eyes down, Yule May hurries out of the kitchen.

72.

**SKEETER**

Not at all. I'm just so busy right now with Mom.

**HILLY**

Skeeter...I'm sorry about your mother. And I know you must be so worried.  
Hilly holds up the Jim Crow booklet.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

But I'm worried about you. All this carrying on lately and now you're reading this stuff?

**SKEETER**

My dad had me get that for him.

**HILLY**

I mean, around your friends is one thing...But, believe it or not, there are real racists in this town! If the wrong person caught you with this...you'd be in serious trouble.  
Skeeter snatches the booklet from Hilly.

**SKEETER**

Thanks, Hilly! And thanks for going through my things.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - SKEETER'S BEDROOM - NEXT DAY**

type Skeeter types feverishly while smoking a cigarette. Keys  
out: "Home Help Sanitation Initiative."  
Skeeter picks up Hilly's document and shakes her head. She  
types: Don't risk your children's and family's health!

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Yule May vacuums. She pulls the sofa away from the wall to clean beneath it.  
Noticing something on the floor, Yule May leans over. She rises holding a SMALL RUBY RING. Years of dust and hair blanket the pitiful gem set in ten karat gold.  
The vacuum seems to roar louder now. Yule May breathes heavily. She shoves the ring into her uniform pocket.

**INT. PHELEN PLANTATION - SKEETER'S BEDROOM - THAT AFTERNOON**

As Skeeter bangs away on her typewriter, Charlotte bursts into the room, stuck somewhere between panic and joy.

73.

**CHARLOTTE**

Skeeter!

**SKEETER**

What?!

**CHARLOTTE**

Don't panic, but there's a very tall man named Stuart here for you.

**SKEETER**

He's a drunken asshole, Mother. You wouldn't like him.  
Charlotte pulls a sun dress out of Skeeter's closet.

**CHARLOTTE**

Skeeter, love and hate are two horns on the same goat. And, you need a goat!

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter, Charlotte and Stuart sit in the living room. Pascagoula serves finger sandwiches. Stuart looks nice in khaki pants, a blue blazer and a red tie. His nose is pink from working in the sun. No one says a word. Finally...

**CHARLOTTE**

Stuart, would you like a cocktail?  
Skeeter shoots her mother a "What the..." look.

**STUART**

No, Ma'am. Little too early.

**SKEETER**

Ha!  
Charlotte moves on.

**CHARLOTTE**

What's your last name, Stuart?

**STUART**

Whitworth.

**CHARLOTTE**

Hmm...Where are you from?

**STUART**

Natchez.

**CHARLOTTE**

Really? Well, I know a Whitworth from Natchez...But he's a Senator up in Washington.

**74.**

**STUART**

Yes, Ma'am. That's my daddy.

**CHARLOTTE**

Who is?

**STUART**

Senator Whitworth. That's my father.

Charlotte's jaw drops to her string of pearls.

**CHARLOTTE**

Really?

Stuart nods. Charlotte stands, flustered yet joyful.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Well...tell him I said "Hello"...I'm going to go see if Pascagoula needs some help in the kitchen.

Charlotte backs away behind Stuart's chair. She points at Skeeter violently, as if to say, DON'T MESS THIS UP!

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter and Stuart stand beneath an old Cypress tree as Charlotte peeps from an upstairs window.

**STUART**

Look. I know it was a few weeks back, but I came here to say I'm

sorry for the way I acted.

**SKEETER**

Who sent you? William or Hilly?

**STUART**

Neither. I was rude, and I've been thinking about it a lot.

**SKEETER**

Well, I haven't. So, just go.

**STUART**

Now, look. I told Hilly I wasn't ready to go out on any date. I wasn't even close to ready. Stuart shoves his hands in his pockets like a boy.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

I was engaged last year. She ended it. Skeeter refuses to pity him.

75.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

We'd been dating since we were fifteen. You know how it is.

**SKEETER**

Actually, I don't. I've never dated anyone before. Stuart looks up and starts laughing loudly.

**STUART**

Well! That must be it then.

**SKEETER**

What?

**STUART**

I've never met a woman that said exactly what she was thinking.

**SKEETER**

I've got plenty to say...

**STUART**

Would you like to...come downtown with me and have dinner? We could



talk... We could listen to each other this time.

**SKEETER**

I can't think of anything worse. Stuart looks down and nods.

**STUART**

Then, I'm sorry. That's what I came to say and...I said it. Stuart turns and walks towards his car, self-consciously weaving his strong fingers through his hair. Skeeter looks up to her mother's empty window and shouts out to Stuart.

**SKEETER**

Just give me a minute! Stuart turns.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Let me get my sweater.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Skeeter and Stuart sit closely as the same waiter as before approaches.

**STUART**

What do you want, Skeeter?

76.

**SKEETER**

I'll have a Co-cola. Lots of ice.

**STUART**

No, I mean in life. What do you want?

Only now does Skeeter notice the tray of champagne the waiter is holding. Stuart nods as two glasses are set before them. The waiter leaves.

**SKEETER**

I want to be a journalist. Maybe a novelist. Maybe both.

**STUART**

I like that...I've been thinking about you. You're smart, you're pretty, you're...tall!

**SKEETER**

Pretty?

**STUART**

Yes. And I read your column. Very informative.

**(SMILING)**

I never knew Crisco got rid of diaper rash.  
Skeeter laughs and slaps him playfully.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

I hope you get to write something really good, Skeeter. Something you believe in.  
Stuart suddenly leans over and kisses Skeeter.

**EXT. DRIVE-IN-MOVIE - ONE WEEK LATER**

Stuart and Skeeter make out HARD in the back of the Holbrook's convertible. Hilly and William sit in the front. Hilly peers into the rearview mirror to get a better view. Proud of herself, she pats William's leg. William slides his hand up Hilly's leg. She jerks it away.

**EXT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - DAY**

Aibileen sits on the kitchen floor next to a bucket. She feverishly scours grease off the baseboards. Elizabeth's car pulls up. Aibileen smiles.

**AIBILEEN**

Baby girl home.

77.

The car door slams shut.

**ELIZABETH (O.C.)**

Aibileen! My trunk's full!  
Aibileen rises slowly, placing a hand on her knee. Outside, Elizabeth suddenly shouts out hysterically.

**ELIZABETH (O.C.) (CONT'D)**

Mae Mobley! No! Stop!  
Aibileen panics. She gets up, looks out the window.

**INT. LEEFOLT BACKYARD - SAME TIME**

Mae Mobley sits on Aibileen's toilet in the garage. Door wide open, pants around her ankles.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Me and Aibiee bafroom, Momma.  
Elizabeth runs over and yanks Mae Mobley off, popping her hard on the behind.

**ELIZABETH**

It! Is! Not!  
Mae Mobley begins to cry. Aibileen watches as Elizabeth  
hiss- whispers and yanks Mae Mobley hard on the arm.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

This is dirty out here! You'll  
catch diseases.  
Elizabeth punctuates with three more slaps to her legs.

**ELIZABETH (CONT'D)**

No! No! No!

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Aibileen sits on the couch with Mae Mobley who eats a  
cookie.  
Mae Mobley's face is red and damp.

**AIBILEEN**

I'm here, baby girl. Aibee's here.  
Aibileen kisses her on the cheek.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

You is kind. You is smart. You is  
important...You want me to tell you  
one a our secret stories?  
Mae Mobley nods. The phone rings. Aibileen rises.

**ELIZABETH (O.C.)**

I got it!

78.

Aibileen sits back down and leans into Mae Mobley.

**AIBILEEN**

One day this wise Martian come down  
to Earth to teach us people a thing  
or two.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Martian? How big?

**AIBILEEN**

Oh, he about six-two.

**MAE MOBLEY**

What's his name?

**AIBILEEN**

Martian Luther King.

**MAE MOBLEY**

What did he look like?

**AIBILEEN**

Looked just like us, nose, mouth,  
hair on his head. But, sometimes  
people looked at him funny and were  
just downright mean to him.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Why Aibee? Why was they so mean?

**AIBILEEN**

`Cause he was green.  
Elizabeth suddenly barges into the living room.

**ELIZABETH**

Aibileen! Come on! We have to go  
help Hilly. Now! Come on!  
Elizabeth runs outside. Aibileen grabs Mae Mobley.

**EXT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Elizabeth wobbles briskly up the street holding her pregnant  
belly. Aibileen and Mae Mobley follow.  
A stream of people walk toward them, laughing.  
They round a corner to see FIFTY OLD TOILETS, in every shape  
and color imaginable, littering Hilly's lawn.

Some have towering tanks with chain pulls at the top, providing amusement to the procession of cars driving by. The Holbrook's station wagon sits in the driveway, doors still open with LUGGAGE tied to the roof.

William's Two OLD BLACK MEN struggle to remove a toilet under supervision.

79.

Aibileen hides her smile. Mae Mobley points.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Look! Look, Aibee.  
Hilly flies out of her house as a REPORTER snaps a picture of her.

**HILLY**

Get out of here!  
Hilly pushes him in the bushes and runs up to Elizabeth.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Skeeter! She put it in the newsletter. I specifically said old coats are to be dropped at my house. Not commodes!  
Hilly faces the toilets again and screams.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

She put it in the newsletter when she knew we'd be down at the beach.  
Hilly steps up to Aibileen and points to the old men.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Go help those boys GET THOSE

**TOILETS OFF MY LAWN!**

**INT. BUS - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Aibileen rides in the back of a bus with a YOUNG BLACK MAN. Two white men sit right behind the white driver. The bus slows to a stop in the middle of the road. In the distance, blue lights flash in front of a road block. A few people gather.

**DRIVER**

Y'all stay put. Let me find out

what's going on.  
As the driver gets up, a WLBT-TV news truck whizzes by followed by a police motorcycle. Aibileen leans in the aisle and looks ahead.  
The driver returns. The young black man speaks up.

**YOUNG BLACK MAN**

What happen up there, Mister?

**DRIVER**

Colored people off. White people lemme know where y'all are going. I'll get you as close as I can.

80.

As the young black man helps Aibileen down the aisle, a white passenger taps the driver on the shoulder.

**WHITE PASSENGER**

What's going on?  
Aibileen and the young man walk down the stairs.

**DRIVER**

I don't know. Some nigger got shot. Where you headed?  
The bus door shuts and the driver backs away.

**EXT. STREET - MINUTES LATER**

Aibileen and the young man walk along a dark street. The sound of cicadas and sirens fill the air.

**YOUNG BLACK MAN**

You all right? You close to home?

**AIBILEEN**

I be all right. My house is seven blocks from here.

**YOUNG BLACK MAN**

Want me to walk you?

**AIBILEEN**

Naw, thank ya. I'll be fine...Law,  
I hope this ain't as bad as-  
Aibileen turns to discover the young man is gone. She stares into the darkness. Scared, she begins to run.

She cuts through a yard and trips over a hedge. She falls hard to her knees.

Terrified, Aibileen begins to sob. She sees Minny's porch light and pulls herself up.

**INT. MINNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER**

Minny sits with all five of her children, Sugar, LEROY JR, 12, KINDRA, 10, FELICIA, 6, and BENNY, 4. They all listen anxiously to a radio on the table.

Aibileen opens the screen door and falls to the floor. Minny jumps up to help her. She sees blood and grass stains streaking the knees of Aibileen's panty hose.

**MINNY**

Aibileen! You okay?  
Aibileen nods, trying to compose herself.

**81.**

**RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)**

Almost ten years serving as the  
Field Secretary for the  
NAACP...Medgar Evers is dead.  
Aibileen swallows hard.

**MINNY**

KKK shot him! Hour ago. Right in  
front a his children, Aibileen.

**AIBILEEN**

We gone pray for the Evers. We  
gone pray for Myrlie.  
Minny raises her fists.

**MINNY**

We living in hell! We trapped.  
Our kids is trapped.  
Minny turns to Sugar.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Take your brother and sister and go  
get in my bed. Stay there!  
Sugar leads the kids to the back of the house.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

What they gone do to us if they  
catch us with Miss Skeeter?

**AIBILEEN**

We gone be careful.

**MINNY**

Hitch us to a pickup and drag us  
behind? Shoot me front a my kids?

**AIBILEEN**

We ain't doing civil rights with  
Miss Skeeter. We just tellin'  
stories like they really happen.  
Minnie and Aibileen grab hands and squeeze hard.

**MINNY**

You a fool, old woman. A fool!  
Aibileen hugs Minny.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

I can't believe I'm on say this...  
But, I actually wish Leroy was home  
right now.  
Aibileen and Minny laugh a little through the tears.

82.

**INT. HARPER AND ROW PUBLISHING - OFFICE - NEW YORK**

Elaine Stein sits at her desk flipping through the New York  
Times. She notices something, actually laughs.

**CLOSE ON PAPER:**

her  
A picture shows Hilly standing among the fifty toilets in  
front yard. A caption reads:  
"Come on by, have a seat!"  
Home of William and Hilly Holbrook, Jackson, Mississippi.

**EXT. OFFSHORE OIL RIG - DAY**

Stuart, on the deck of an offshore oil rig, laughs as he  
looks at Hilly's picture inside a local newspaper.  
He writes on the back of a postcard addressed to Skeeter:  
I guess you potty trained Hilly!  
Much love, Stuart.



**EXT. JUNIOR LEAGUE - PARKING LOT - THREE DAYS LATER**

Skeeter parks and gets out of her car. She suddenly finds herself face to face with Hilly.

**HILLY**

You are sick. Do not speak to me.  
Do not look at me. Don't say hello  
to my children. How long had you  
been planning to humiliate my  
family?

**SKEETER**

That's not it, Hilly.

**HILLY**

You thought you were so clever,  
didn't ya? But I've already  
installed three of those old  
toilets in people's garages.

**SKEETER**

Technically, it was a typo, Hilly.

**HILLY**

I intend to tell Stuart he's  
ruining his reputation by  
associating with you. Jolene's  
yard boy saw you hanging around the  
colored bus stop.

**SKEETER**

I wasn't hanging-

**83.**

**HILLY**

I guess your car was in the shop?  
Skeeter looks away.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

You know as well as I do, people  
won't buy so much as a slice of  
pound cake from an organization  
that harbors racial  
integrationists!  
Skeeter steps forward.

**SKEETER**

Hilly, just who is that pound cake

money being raised for, anyway?  
Hilly rolls her eyes.

**HILLY**

"The Starving Children of Africa."  
Skeeter nods and walks away. Hilly shouts out.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Just so you know, Lou Ann Templeton  
has taken your seat at bridge club.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

Minnie walks in, notices it's eerily quiet.

**MINNY**

Miss Celia?

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Minnie walks into Celia's bedroom.

**MINNY**

Miss Celia, you in here?  
Minnie hears running water and muffled crying behind the  
bathroom door. She presses her ear to the door.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Hello? You sick?  
Minnie twists the knob. It's locked.

**CELIA (O.C.)**

I'm fine. Minny. Go on home for  
the day.

**MINNY**

You mess up your hair coloring  
again? I helped you fix it last  
time, got it back real pretty.

**84.**

Celia yells at Minny for the very first time.

**CELIA (O.C.)**

I said go home, Minny!  
Minnie sees water creeping out from under the door. She steps

back and charges, shoulder first.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The bathroom door bursts open with splinters of wood. Minny slips in a pool of watered down blood. Celia sits against the wall in a bloody nightgown.

**MINNY**

Miss Celia!  
Celia aimlessly moves the blood around with a wash cloth.

**CELIA**

There's so much blood. Why is there so much blood this time?  
Minny crawls over, peers into the toilet bowl and gags.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

Please, Minny. Will you get it out? I can't look at it again.  
Shaken, Minny reaches for a trash can. She puts her hand on Celia's neck and pushes it down.

**MINNY**

Keep your head down.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE- BEDROOM - LATER THAT DAY**

Celia lies in bed while Minny presses a cool rag to her forehead. Celia stares out of her bedroom window.

**CELIA'S POV:**

The two rosebushes stand in the middle of the front lawn. A DOCTOR enters the room.

**DOCTOR**

Give her another pill if she gets too agitated. There'll be more bleeding, but don't call me unless it's heavy.  
Minny nods as the doctor leaves.

**CELIA**

We got married because I was pregnant. But it slipped out too.

**MINNY**

That's just God's way. Next one's gonna catch.

**CELIA**

Johnny wants kids now. I thought if I was real still, brought somebody in to do the house and cooking, maybe I'd hold on to this one. Oh, Minny, what's he gonna do with me?

**MINNY**

He gone have to get over this. He needs to know this takes time.

**CELIA**

He doesn't know about this one, or the one before...  
Minny turns to Celia, stunned by this revelation.

**CELIA FOOTE**

Minny, you know how to play bridge, don't you?  
Minny nods.

**MINNY**

Yes, ma'am. I used to help Missus Walters practice.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING**

Aibileen holds a plate of grits covered in toasted marshmallows, strawberries and three lighted candles.

**AIBILEEN**

Happy Birthday! Mae Mobley two today!  
Mae Mobley laughs as Aibileen sets down the grits.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Mae Mobley three!

**AIBILEEN**

You sure is, Baby Girl. Blow'em out `fo they run up in your grits.  
Mae Mobley blows out the candles.

**MAE MOBLEY**

How old are you, Aibiee?

**AIBILEEN**

Fifty-three.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Do you get burfdays?

**86.**

Mae Mobley picks up a candle and licks off the grits.

**AIBILEEN**

Gone be fifty-four next week.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Do you have some babies?

**AIBILEEN**

I gots seventeen of `em.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Where are the babies?

**AIBILEEN**

They all over town.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Aibee...You're my real mama.

**AIBILEEN**

Now, you know who your momma is.

**MAE MOBLEY**

I'm your real baby, Aibee. Those other ones are just pretend.

**EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - FRONT YARD - EARLY MORNING**

Celia digs a hole next to the two existing rosebushes. A closed shoebox and new rosebush wait to be planted. Celia lowers the box in the grave, covering it with dirt.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING**

Celia and Minny sit at a card table holding playing cards.

two

Two additional hands lay face up on the table in front of empty chairs across from them. Minny lays down one of her cards then looks over to Celia's hand. She removes a card from Celia's and lays it down. She then points to the hand next to Celia. Celia nods.

**INT. JUNIOR LEAGUE - MEETING HALL - DAY**

Hilly stands at her podium, tan and ready to lead. She holds her gavel like a weapon.

**HILLY**

Okay. First order of business. We're updating our newsletter. Hilly stares right at Skeeter who sits alone in the back.

**87.**

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

We're adding a fashion column with all the latest trends...Your dresses better be cute at next week's benefit! The women applaud and tap each other on their thighs.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Now it's time to choose a new editor for our new modern monthly. Skeeter braces herself as hands pop up everywhere. Jolene French stands.

**JOLENE FRENCH**

I nominate Hilly Holbrook. Jolene looks back and snarls at Skeeter.

**HILLY**

Jolene, you're the sweetest thing!

**OTHER MEMBERS**

I second. I third. All in favor of Hilly, say "Aye." The room erupts.

**MEMBERS**

Aye! Skeeter's ousting took less than ten seconds. Elizabeth

secretly turns to Skeeter from a few rows ahead.

**ELIZABETH**

**(MOUTHING)**

I'm so sorry.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - FRONT PORCH - MORNING**

Skeeter sits alone on the porch swing in her nightgown, shifting through the Miss Myrna letters. Charlotte steps onto the porch.

**CHARLOTTE**

Honey, would you like me to drop you off at bridge club on the way to my doctor's appointment?

**SKEETER**

**(COVERING)**

No, Ma'am. It's been cancelled. Mae Mobley's sick or something.

**88.**

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY**

Bridge is underway at the Leefolt house. Aibileen enters holding a tray of coffee cups. Elizabeth, Hilly, Jolene and several other girls giggle as they kneel down behind furniture.

**AIBILEEN**

Everything okay?  
Elizabeth looks back. Her belly is huge.

**ELIZABETH**

Shhh!  
There's a knock at door.

**CELIA (O.C.)**

Elizabeth, it's me, Celia Foote. I was in the neighborhood and thought I'd drop by.  
The girls giggle more loudly now. Celia peers into the living room window.  
The bridge tables are in plain view. Celia's face grows

pinker than her sweater.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

I...brought you a chocolate  
pie...My maid, Minny, made it.  
Hilly's face hardens...

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Minny stands at the sink shelling peas. A distinct red cut  
is perched above her swollen eye.  
Celia sits at the kitchen table halfway through the pie.

**CELIA**

They made me stand there like the  
vacuum man. Why, Minny?  
Minny freezes, keeping her face on the peas.

**MINNY**

Because they know about you getting  
knocked up by Mister Johnny. They  
mad you married one a they mens.  
Especially since Mister Johnny and  
Miss Hilly had just broke up, too.

**CELIA**

So, Hilly probably thinks I was  
fooling around with Johnny while  
they were still going steady.

89.

**MINNY**

Missus Walters says Miss Hilly  
still sweet on Mister Johnny, too.  
Celia suddenly slaps her thigh with excitement.

**CELIA**

No wonder! They don't hate  
me...They hate what they think I  
did!

**MINNY**

They hate you cause they think  
you're white trash! And don't be  
takin' pies to those women!

**CELIA**



Well, I'm just going to have to let  
Hilly know I'm not a boyfriend  
stealer. In fact, I'll tell her  
Friday night at the benefit.  
Celia rises and smiles like she just cured cancer.

**MINNY**

Now, Miss Celia...please don't be  
going to that benefit.  
Celia gets some ice out of the fridge.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Did you hear what I said?  
Celia places the ice in a towel and approaches Minny. She  
looks at the cut above her eye.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

What are you doing?

**CELIA**

That looks bad.

**MINNY**

I got to get my work done.

**CELIA**

I know you didn't fall in the tub,  
Minny. Let me take a look.  
Celia grabs Minny's hand. Minny pulls away.  
Just then Johnny pulls up in the driveway. Celia and Minny  
turn to the window, then spring into action.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Minny sits crouched on the lid of the guest bath toilet as  
Johnny chases Celia around the house. Celia giggles.

**90.**

**JOHNNY (O.C.)**

Come here, Sexy!

**CELIA(O.C.)**

Johnny, you are bad! Bad! Bad!  
Minny looks at the ridiculous image of herself crouching on  
the toilet in the bathroom mirror.  
She raises Celia's ice rag up to her swollen eye.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NEXT AFTERNOON**

Skeeter enters quietly through Aibileen's kitchen door. She is surprised to see twenty other black women standing solemnly around the kitchen and the living room. Aibileen approaches with a worried look.

**SKEETER**

What's wrong?

**AIBILEEN**

Yule May in prison, Miss Skeeter.  
Gone be there four years.  
Minnie shouts out across the kitchen.

**MINNY**

Hilly Holbrook been sent from the  
devil to ruin all our lives.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOME (FLASHBACK) - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Hilly and the usual suspects play bridge at Hilly's house. Aibileen pours coffee an earshot away.

**HILLY**

Please! A nigra walks in a pawn  
shop with a ring of such size and  
clarity. It took'em all of five  
minutes to figure out where she  
worked.  
Hilly leads the girls' nods of acknowledgement.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

I knew that girl was a thief the  
day she started.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

As Minny wipes her nose with her sleeve, Skeeter approaches.

**SKEETER**

I'll ask daddy to get her a good  
lawyer.

**MINNY**

She had a lawyer. A white lawyer!  
But Miss Hilly friends with the  
judge's wife. Whole thing took two  
days. Arrested on Tuesday, in the  
state pen by Wednesday.

**AIBILEEN**

The church gone send them boys to  
college. Gone pass the plate `til  
they graduate...  
The women part, making way as Aibileen leads Skeeter to a  
seat at the kitchen table.  
PEARLY, 58, sits next to Skeeter and touches her arm.

**PEARLY**

I'm on help with your stories.  
Another WOMAN walks over.

**BLACK WOMAN**

I'm on help too.  
Another woman speaks from the living room.

**BLACK WOMAN 2**

We all are.  
Women of all ages slowly rise up and nod their heads.  
Skeeter  
looks around in awe.

**SKEETER**

Thank you. I don't know what to-

**MINNY**

**(STERNLY)**

They doing this for Yule May.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter sits and writes as Pearly begins the interviews.

**PEARLY**

Been there thirty-eight years and  
Miss Margaret still makes me put my  
hair up in a rag. Say she know  
coloreds don't wash theys hair.  
But, I love her. She love me too.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**CORA, 70.**

**CORA**

I had been workin' for Miss Jolene's mother up `til she died. Then her daughter, Miss Nancy, asked me to come work for her. Miss Nancy a real sweet lady.

**92.**

**CORA (CONT'D)**

But her momma left it in the will that I had to work for her daughter, Miss Jolene. Miss Jolene a mean woman. Mean for sport. I tried to get another job, but in everbody mind, the French family and Miss Jolene owned me.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

CALLIE, 60, takes off her glasses and wipes her eyes.

**CALLIE**

I used to take a shortcut ever day to work at Doctor Dixon's house. Cut through this farmer's lower forty to get there. One day, that farmer was waitin' on me with a gun, said he'd shoot me dead if I walk on his land again. Doctor Dixon went and paid that farmer double for two a those acres. Told him he `bout to start farmin' too. But he bought it just for me. So I could get to work easy. He did. Skeeter closes her eyes for moment. When she opens them she sees A VISION OF CONSTANTINE

STANDING

**BEFORE HER.**

Constantine smiles and grabs Skeeter's hand. She presses her thumb firmly in her palm. When Skeeter blinks again, the vision is gone.

Standing in place of Constantine is GRETCHEN, 26.

**GRETCHEN**

All these colored women have been

real nice, haven't they?

**SKEETER**

Yes. Very nice.

**GRETCHEN**

Well, they hate you. You know this? Every little thing about you. But you're so dumb, you think you're doing them a favor. Skeeter and the other maids are taken aback.

**SKEETER**

You don't have to do this.

**GRETCHEN**

You know the nicest thing a white woman's ever done for me? Gave me the heel of her bread. These women are playing a trick on you. They'll never tell you the truth!

**93.**

**SKEETER**

You don't know what they've said.

**GRETCHEN**

Say it, lady, say the word you think every time one us stands in front of you. Nigger. Aibileen crosses over to Gretchen.

**AIBILEEN**

That's enough, Gretchen.

**GRETCHEN**

You just as dumb as she is.

**AIBILEEN**

Get out a my house!

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Aibileen sits with Skeeter on the sofa reading and answering Miss Myrna letters. Aibileen is dressed very nicely. Several flower arrangements are placed around the room. An unwrapped present rests on the coffee table.

**AIBILEEN**

Tell her to pour vinegar in her trash cans. Then them dogs will stay away.

As Skeeter writes this down, someone walks onto Aibileen's front porch. Skeeter becomes worried. Aibileen looks to a wall clock and smiles.

About a dozen letters and cards fall into a basket under the mail slot.

Aibileen jumps up and starts sorting through the cards.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Today my birthday, Miss Skeeter.

**SKEETER**

Well, happy birthday, Aibileen. You should have told me.

**AIBILEEN**

And, from all over the county, my babies find they way home.

Aibileen stops on one card in particular. She sits back down next to Skeeter.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Some even from overseas. Alton Spears lives in Paris now. Married him a real pretty French girl. Got five kids, too...they's my grandbabies.

94.

Aibileen opens the card to find a twenty dollar bill inside along with a picture of the Spears family. Aibileen reads the card aloud.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

I still don't drink coffee. Happy Birthday. Love Alton.

Aibileen laughs and raises her hand to her mouth. Skeeter is touched.

The doorbell rings. Aibileen jumps up and opens the door. A delivery man greets her with two more vases of flowers.

Aibileen looks out to the street where a white woman gets

out

of her car with a huge country ham. Two little girls in matching dresses jump out behind her.

The woman sees Aibileen on the porch and waves. Aibileen waves back and smiles.

Catching it all, the moment soon grows bittersweet for Skeeter. She wipes her eye.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - SKEETER'S BEDROOM - 3 WEEKS LATER**

Morning light shines into Skeeter's room. Stuart has returned from the rig. Fully clothed, he and Skeeter sleep on Skeeter's bed.

Charlotte shouts Skeeter's name from down the hall.

**CHARLOTTE (O.C.)**

Eugenia?!

Skeeter's eyes pop open. She's groggy and hasn't fully realized the company lying next to her.

**SKEETER**

What?!

Stuart throws his arm over Skeeter. Reality sinks in. Skeeter rolls over to find Stuart, eyes shut, smiling.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Oh my God! Oh my God!

When Stuart tries to get up, Skeeter flattens him reaches down and pulls the covers up over his entire body.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

Don't move a muscle!

Skeeter props up on her side and faces the door making sure the covers hide that she's clothed.

Charlotte enters and heads straight for Skeeter's closet.

**CHARLOTTE**

Morning, Sleepy Head.

95.

**SKEETER**

Morning, Mom.

Charlotte pulls out a dress and lays it on the bed, right on top of Stuart.

**CHARLOTTE**

I thought you could take me to the doctor this morning and then we could get some lunch afterwards.

**SKEETER**

Sure!

Charlotte spies a LARGE TOE sticking out of the covers. It belongs to Stuart, but she assumes it's Skeeter's.

**CHARLOTTE**

(looking at toe)  
Or...we could...go straight to  
Fanny Mae's for a girl day.

**SKEETER**

Great! I'll get dressed.

**CHARLOTTE**

When did Stuart leave last night?

**SKEETER**

Right after you went to bed.

**CHARLOTTE**

Well, I hope he knows he's welcome  
to stay in Carlton's old room.

**SKEETER**

I'm not really ready for that yet.

**CHARLOTTE**

"Bird in the hand," Eugenia. Bird.  
In. The. Hand...  
Charlotte exits and shuts the door.

**STUART**

(under the covers.)  
Chirp. Chirp.  
Skeeter is mortified. Stuart sits up, grinning.

**SKEETER**

Oh my God!  
Stuart tries to kiss Skeeter. She resists.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

My breath is horrible.

**STUART**

So is mine.

**96.**

Stuart embraces Skeeter and brings his lips close to hers.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

I love you.



**SKEETER**

I love you, too.  
They kiss.

**EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN JACKSON - DAY**

A bank's clock shows twelve noon in downtown Jackson. It's eerily quiet, not a soul on the street...  
We hear archival footage of Walter Cronkite addressing the nation.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - SAME DAY**

Minnie stands at the top of a tall step ladder vacuuming Oscar's head.  
Celia runs into the living room. Tears stream down her face.  
Minnie turns to Celia.  
Cronkite tells the nation that John F. Kennedy is dead.  
Minnie's eyes roll back in her head as she starts to faint.  
She grabs on to Oscar's body and slides down to the floor.

**EXT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - SAME DAY**

Hilly sits with her son William playing on a blanket on the front lawn.  
A neighbor suddenly pulls up in his car stopping in front of Hilly. He leans out and tells Hilly the tragic news.  
In complete disbelief, Hilly puts her hand over her mouth.  
She then grabs William, pulls him in close as if he's  
in danger.

somehow

**EXT. BUS STOP - LATER THAT DAY**

Aibileen huddles with a dozen other maids in a circle.  
They're all crying. Some throw their hands in the air.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - LIVING ROOM - THREE DAYS LATER**

Skeeter and Stuart sit solemnly with the Phelan family watching Cronkite's coverage of the Kennedy funeral.  
Skeeter's dad wipes tears from his eyes. Stuart checks the

time and leans into Skeeter's ear.

97.

**STUART**

Honey, I'm sorry, but I have to get  
down to the coast.  
Skeeter nods as Stuart kisses her.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

I'll be back in time for the  
benefit. Love you.

**SKEETER**

You, too.  
We hear Walter Cronkite's parting thoughts on JFK.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Minnie, Skeeter and Aibileen sit quietly compiling stories.  
Aibileen and Minny look up to Aibileen's framed picture of  
John F. Kennedy.  
Aibileen grows anxious. She suddenly jumps out of her chair  
and paces around the kitchen.

**SKEETER**

Are you okay?

**AIBILEEN**

The world done gone crazy, Miss  
Skeeter! And I'm scared! What if  
folks find out what we writing?  
Figure out Niceville really  
Jackson, and figure out who who?

**SKEETER**

Aibileen. We've changed all the  
names.  
Aibileen snaps.

**AIBILEEN**

Y'all two gone sit there and tell  
me you one hundred percent without  
a doubt sure `bout all this?!  
Skeeter looks away..

**MINNY**

No...So I been thinking...Maybe we

need us some insurance.  
Skeeter look to Minny.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

I told God I'd never speak of it again. But we got no choice. It's time...Time to tell you both "the terrible awful" I did to Miss Hilly. It might be the only thing to protect us.

98.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE (FLASHBACK) - KITCHEN - 6 MONTHS EARLIER**

We continue with the earlier flashback where Minny arrives  
at Hilly's with her famed chocolate pie. Hilly leads Minny into the kitchen, Missus Walters follows behind. Hilly slices a big piece and grabs a fork. She leans against the counter and takes a big bite.

**HILLY**

Nobody wanted to hire a sass-mouthing, thieving nigra, did they?  
Minny stands silent as Hilly finishes in three bites.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Pie's as good as always, Minny.

**MINNY**

I'm glad you like it.  
Hilly cuts another piece for herself.

**HILLY**

If...I take you back, I'll have to cut your pay five dollars a week.  
Not expecting this, Minny leans away from Hilly.

**MINNY**

Take me back?  
Hilly takes an even bigger bite from the second slice.

**HILLY**

What do you put in here that makes it taste so good?

**MINNY**

That good vanilla from Mexico...  
Minny's eyes narrow over a forced smile.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

And...something else real special.  
Missus Walters grabs a plate and reaches for the pie.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

No, Missus Walters. That Miss  
Hilly's special pie.

**HILLY**

Momma can have a piece.  
Hilly slides the pie a little too fast down the counter  
toward Minny. Minny stops it before it falls to the floor.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Cut her one.

**99.**

**MINNY**

**(IMMEDIATELY)**

Eat my shit.  
Hilly calmly sets her plate down on the counter.

**HILLY**

What did you say?

**MINNY**

I said eat my shit!

**HILLY**

Have you lost your mind?!  
Minny moves toward Hilly.

**MINNY**

No. But you're about to,  
'cause you just did.  
Minny nods smugly as she looks down at Hilly's slice.

**HILLY**

Did what?  
Missus Walters immediately gets it. She bursts out laughing  
so hard she has to lower herself to the floor.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

Well, Hilly, that's what you get, I  
guess. And you didn't just eat  
one. You ate two slices!  
Hilly starts to hyperventilate as everything sinks in.

As Minny leaves, Hilly runs to the sink and throws up.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Aibileen and Skeeter are speechless.

**AIBILEEN**

You trying to get yourself killed?!

**MINNY**

No! I never planned to tell her!  
I just wanted to see her take a  
bite and leave so I could be done  
with her. Forever! She was never  
supposed to ask me back.  
Minny eyes narrow.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

And, then for less pay! That got  
me even madder. And, then she went  
slid that pie at me. Oh lord!  
That was it! I just lost control,  
Aibileen...you know how I get, now.

**100.**

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

So, before I knew it, it just came  
on out my mouth...and I had tolt  
her what was in that pie.  
Aibileen looks to Skeeter shaking her head. Minny suddenly  
gets misty. She wipes her eyes.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

I've asked God to forgive me. But,  
more for what happened to poor  
Missus Walters. Miss Hilly threw  
her in that nursing home just for  
laughing.

**AIBILEEN**

**(GRAVELY)**

We can't put that story in the  
book.

**SKEETER**

It's too dangerous, Minny.

**MINNY**

We need insurance! Hilly Holbrook can't never let people know that pie story is about her.

**AIBILEEN**

Exactly! If people find out "The Terrible Awful" was you and Miss Hilly, then we in trouble. Trouble there ain't words for!

**MINNY**

Right! But don't you see? Miss Hilly gone go to her grave convincing people this book ain't about Jackson. Then we safe, insured!

Minny gets up and walks toward Aibileen.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

You brought me into this, and I'm on finish it! Either put it in or pull my parts out all together. Minny storms out of Aibileen's kitchen.

**INT. HARPER ROW PUBLISHING/PANTRY (INTERCUT) - DAY**

Miss Stein talks to Skeeter on the phone.

**MISS STEIN**

The last editor's meeting is December 17th. If you want a chance of this getting read, I need it in my hands by then.

**SKEETER**

But that's in a week, Miss Stein!

**101.**

**MISS STEIN**

Otherwise it goes in The Pile. You don't want it in The Pile.

**SKEETER**

Yes, Ma'am.

**MISS STEIN**

And you must get a piece in about  
the domestic who raised you. It'll  
add something personal to it.  
Skeeter nods with frustration.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - BALLROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

The African Children's Benefit Ball is well underway.  
The energy and look of the two hundred attendees feel like a  
throwback to the women's suffrage movement. Many older women  
wear heavy long black skirts and jackets.  
Hilly wears swathes of maroon-colored taffeta. Ruffles  
clutch her throat. She stands next to Jolene French and a

**WLBT CAMERAMAN.**

Dressed to the nines, Jolene raises a microphone and looks  
into the camera.

**JOLENE**

This is Jolene French reporting  
from the African Children's Benefit  
Ball, and I'm here with League  
President Miss Hilly Holbrook.

**HILLY**

Thanks, Jolene...  
Three dozen servers stand in a line. Minny and Aibileen are  
among them.  
Tables are covered with items donated for the auction.  
On the baked goods table, Minny's famed chocolate pie  
promises to again be a big money maker.  
Celia and Johnny enter the ballroom. Celia wears a hideous,  
pink and silver sequined gown. As usual, Celia's breasts  
command attention.  
The room locks on Celia as specks of light bounce off her  
dress and jiggle across the ceiling.  
A TITILLATED OLD HUSBAND tips his martini onto his wife's  
shoe.

**OLD HUSBAND**

(a little too loudly)  
Look at the jugs on that one!

**102.**

Other wives dig fingernails into husbands' arms. The man's  
wife responds louder.

**OLD WIFE**

Bosoms are for bedrooms and breast-feeding. Not occasions of dignity. Celia downs a glass of champagne and leans into Johnny.

**CELIA**

Do you think I might have overdressed a little? It's supposed to be formal, but this looks like a funeral.

**JOHNNY**

You look gorgeous. Minny pulls Aibileen aside and points to Celia.

**MINNY**

Look what she got on. Celia grabs more champagne from a passing server.

**AIBILEEN**

Lord have mercy. Ladies better hold onto they husbands tonight. Celia catches eyes with Minny. She smiles and nods quickly and then looks away, careful not to tip off Johnny of their relationship.

**MINNY**

**(REGARDING JOHNNY)**

And that's the man that don't even know he's paying me. Skeeter enters with Stuart. She wears a long-sleeved black velvet dress and her hair is being somewhat cooperative.

**AIBILEEN**

There's Skeeter and that must be Stuart. He's handsome... Missus Walters?! Missus Walters enters wearing a floor-length blue beaded gown, circa 1943. A white orchid wilts at her clavicle.

**MINNY**

Hilly can throw her in a home, but she can't keep the taxis away.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - BALLROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Celia approaches Elizabeth and Jolene who talk next to a punch bowl. Celia is now drinking some kind of pink drink with an umbrella sticking out of it.



**CELIA**

Well, hello, Elizabeth.

103.

**ELIZABETH**

Hi.

Elizabeth's homemade maternity ball gown resembles a velvet potato sack cinched with red ribbon.

**CELIA**

Those are lovely dresses.

**JOLENE**

Yours too.

**CELIA**

Really?! I was worried I was a tad overdressed.  
Jolene reaches out and pats Celia's shoulder.

**JOLENE**

Oh, no. You're just perfect.  
Elizabeth pulls Jolene away. Celia downs her drink.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - BALLROOM - LATER THAT EVENING**

The guests are now seated at twenty-eight round tables. Scores of black servers dressed in tuxedos ferry plates. Hilly makes her way to the podium.

**HILLY**

Everybody enjoying their dinner?  
The room claps enthusiastically.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

**(FLATLY)**

Let's give a nice round of applause for all the men and women that have helped make tonight possible.  
Hilly mechanically gestures toward the servers in the room.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

A cause I'm sure is dear to their hearts as well.  
Skeeter shakes her head as the less inspired applause dies

down. Celia waves to Minny and jumps out of her chair.

**CELIA**

Woo-hoo!  
Johnny grabs Celia by the arm and pulls her back down. Celia reaches for Johnny's glass of wine.

**JOHNNY**

Honey, maybe you've had enough to drink. Try to eat your dinner.

**104.**

**CELIA**

And have my stomach poke out?!

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - LATER THAT EVENING**

As Celia looks at the prize table's bids, Johnny and Stuart lean against a bar chatting with a few other bored men. Hilly suddenly slides next to Johnny completely ignoring Stuart.

**HILLY**

Why, Johnny Foote. I'm surprised to see you here. Everybody knows you can't stand parties like this. Hilly squeezes the crook of his arm.

**JOHNNY**

Celia wouldn't have missed this for anything.

**HILLY**

Where is that wife of yours? Out selling hotdogs?  
Johnny looks away.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Oh, you know I'm teasing you. We dated long enough where I can do that, can't I?  
Johnny walks away leaving Hilly no choice but to acknowledge Stuart. She and Stuart never look each other's way.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

**(FLATLY)**

Stuart.

**STUART**

**(FLATTER)**

Hilly.  
Hilly walks away as Jolene approaches the podium.

**JOLENE**

I've got the list of winners!

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jolene finishes up the winners list.

**JOLENE**

I hope you enjoy your new set of  
tires, Missus Atwell. Now, on to  
the baked goods.  
Jolene flips a page.

**105.**

**JOLENE (CONT'D)**

Oh, yum! Yum! The highest bid in  
baked goods goes to Minny Jackson's  
chocolate pie. Congratulations,  
Hilly Holbrook!  
The room erupts in applause. Hilly now sits at a table with  
her family, Missus Walters, and the Leefolts.  
Skeeter and Stuart sit at a table full of elderly people

they

don't know.  
Minny clears dishes nearby. Hearing her name, she becomes  
very alert.

**HILLY**

What? I didn't bid on anything.  
Minny turns to find Hilly smiling at her tightly.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Well, wasn't that sweet. Someone  
signed me up for that pie.

**SKEETER**

**(TO STUART)**

Oh, no.

Celia rushes up behind Hilly, her voice slurred.

**CELIA**

Congratulations, Hilly! I didn't know you're a fan of Minny's pies. Hilly remains calm. Celia grabs Hilly's long sleeve.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

I've wanted to talk to you all night. Minny told me why you won't be my friend. You think me and Johnny went behind your back.

**HILLY**

Let me go! Hilly stands up and pulls away. A ripping sound cuts through the air. Celia stares at Hilly's torn cuff in her hands.

**STUART**

Oh, God.

**CELIA**

I'm so sorry.

**HILLY**

**(GRITTED TEETH)**

What are you trying to do to me?  
What are you and that nigra up to?

**106.**

Jolene announces another round of winners loudly over the microphone, forcing Celia to raise her voice.

**CELIA**

I don't know what you-

**HILLY**

-You liar! Who did you tell?! Jolene loses her place on the list. The room grows quiet but Celia is still yelling.

**CELIA**

Hilly, I got pregnant after you and Johnny broke up! The room echoes with Celia's words. Across the room, women's noses wrinkle.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

Oh, shit.

**HILLY**

Shut up, Mother.  
Stuart belts out with a laugh. Skeeter pinches his arm.  
Celia is mortified. Sweat beads on her forehead.

**CELIA**

Johnny never cheated on you...At  
least, not with me.  
Celia starts to breathe heavily. Her eyes start to water.

**HILLY**

Johnny would never-

**CELIA**

And I'm sorry I thought you'd be  
tickled to win that pie.

**HILLY**

You tell that nigra if she tells  
anybody, I will make her suffer.  
Horrified, Skeeter catches eyes with Minny and Aibileen.  
They all immediately look away.  
Johnny makes his way over. Celia holds her breath, shaking  
her head back and forth.

**JOHNNY**

Celia, what's wrong, Honey?

**CELIA**

Uh-oh.  
Celia leans over and vomits on the fleur-de-lis print  
carpet.  
The entire room gasps in horror.

**107.**

**JOHNNY**

Oh, shit!  
Johnny tries to pull Celia back. She pushes Johnny away and  
runs for the bathroom. He follows.  
Hilly marches over to Aibileen who is standing nearby.

**HILLY**

Get that cleaned up before it  
starts to smell.

**AIBILEEN**

Yes, ma'am.

**INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Minny's daughter, Sugar, stands over a large commercial sink filled with sudsy water, washing dishes. Minny approaches from behind as Sugar holds court with five other young girls.

**SUGAR**

That big-boobed lady Momma works for was drunker than an Injun on payday. Upchucked in front a everbody!

As the girls all laugh, Minny pops Sugar hard on the back of her head.

**MINNY**

Don't you never let me hear you talking bad about the lady who puts food in your mouth. Clothes on your back! You hear me? Minny storms off.

**SUGAR**

**(TO HERSELF)**

You do it all the time.

**EXT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - PARKING LOT - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Hilly and William walk to their car. Missus Walters follows closely behind, holding Minny's pie.

**HILLY**

Just come on home and stay with us tonight, Mother.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

No thanks, I got a pie to eat. Hilly spins around and sees the pie.

108.

**HILLY**

You throw that pie away right now!

**MISSUS WALTERS**

I spent good money on this. Won it just for you...

**HILLY**

You?! You signed me up?  
Missus Walters steps up to Hilly.

**MISSUS WALTERS**

I may have trouble remembering my own name and what country I live in. But there's two things I can't seem to forget. That my own daughter threw me in a nursing home...And that she ate Minny's shit.  
Missus Walters winks at Hilly and ambles to a waiting taxi cab.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - BEDROOM - NEXT AFTERNOON**

Celia lies in bed with the covers pulled over her face.  
Minnie enters carrying a tray of food, setting it down next to  
two other trays of uneaten food.

**MINNY**

Ain't Mister Johnny gone wonder how dinner got on the table if you laid up in bed?  
Celia pulls the covers off her head and sits up a little.

**CELIA**

The way Hilly looked at me. Like I was trash on the road.  
Celia pulls a letter out from under the covers.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

She billed me for her dress. In lieu of payment, she's asked that I send two-hundred dollars to the African Children's Fund and then she banned me from all future League events.

**MINNY**

She don't count. Don't judge yourself by the way she see you.

**CELIA**

I'm not right for this kind of life, Minny. I don't need a dinner table for twelve people.

109.

**CELIA (CONT'D)**

I couldn't get two people over here if I begged. She called me a liar and accused me of getting her that pie. I wouldn't have thrown up if it wasn't for that! I can't do this anymore to Johnny. I'm going back to Sugar Ditch.

**MINNY**

You gone leave your husband cause you threw up at some party?  
Celia sobs.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Lord, I reckon it's time you knew.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Celia stares at Minny, wide-eyed and disgusted.

**MINNY**

Miss Hilly thought you knew `bout "The Terrible Awful," that you were making fun a her. It's my fault she pounced on you. But if you leave Mister Johnny, then Miss Hilly done won the whole ball game. Then she done beat me, and she done beat you.  
Celia lies there. Minny's concerned she's said too much.

**CELIA**

Thank you. For telling me that.

**INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - NEW ORLEANS - ONE WEEK LATER**

Stuart lies on a bed inside the Presidential Suite of the Roosevelt Hotel. He's on the phone with Skeeter.



**STUART**

Hey, Honey.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION (INTERCUT) - KITCHEN - SAME TIME**

Skeeter talks to Stuart. Pascagoula cooks breakfast.

**SKEETER**

Stuart! How are you calling me?  
Aren't you on the rig?

**STUART**

What if I told you I have twenty-  
four hours in New Orleans?

**110.**

**STUART (CONT'D)**

That I'm in the Presidential Suite  
of the Roosevelt Hotel...That we  
have dinner reservations in the  
Blue Room tonight and lunch  
tomorrow at Galatoires.  
Skeeter becomes troubled...

**STUART (CONT'D)**

Did you hear me? I spoke to your  
dad, and he's gonna have Jameso  
drive you down right now.

**SKEETER**

Oh, Stuart.

**STUART**

What?

**SKEETER**

I have to work.

**STUART**

Work in the car. Jesus, Skeeter,  
it's a cleaning column.

**SKEETER**

I have a deadline, Sweetie. You  
should have asked me about this.

**STUART**

I'm trying to be romantic...

**SKEETER**

I'm sorry, Honey. I can't come.  
Stuart shakes his head and hangs up the phone.

**INT. FAYE BELLE'S HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Aibileen and Skeeter sit across from, FAYE BELLE, 101, palsied and gray skinned and hunched in a wheelchair. Aibileen grabs Faye Belle's hand stirring a sudden flash of memory. Her voice is coarse and hard to understand.

**FAYE BELLE**

I remember hiding with Miss Lilia in a steamer trunk while Yankee soldiers stomped through Master's house. We were both four. Eighty-five years later she died in my arms. We's were friends `til the end. Her grandson still pays my rent. Buys all my groceries too.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT**

The manuscript sits before Aibileen, Minny and Skeeter.

111.

**SKEETER**

I have one more story to type, but other than that, we are done.

**AIBILEEN**

Law, look at all them pages. Two-hundred and sixty-six of `em.

**MINNY**

Now we just wait and see? Hopin' Missus Stein publish it?  
Skeeter nods.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

What story you got left to type?

**SKEETER**

Mine.  
Aibileen looks at Skeeter.

**AIBILEEN**

If your momma won't tell you, I  
reckon I will.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Red-eyed, Skeeter enters Charlotte's room. A bowl rests on  
the bedside table with a wet rag draped over the side.  
Charlotte is wig free and terribly thin. Her collarbone  
protrudes long and narrow, but her eyes are as sharp as  
ever.

**CHARLOTTE**

Have you been crying? You know  
that ages your skin, Dear.

**SKEETER**

Mother, I need to talk to you about  
Constantine.

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh, Eugenia. That was so long ago.

**SKEETER**

Well, I have to speak to her.

**CHARLOTTE**

Now, you look. I was good to  
Constantine. Oh, she talked back  
plenty of times, and I put up with  
it. But, Skeeter, she didn't give  
me a choice...

**SKEETER**

What...happened?

**112.**

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION (FLASHBACK) LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Charlotte, much healthier, scurries around the house  
adjusting flower arrangements and straightening pictures.

**CHARLOTTE (V.O.)**

I was hosting a D.A.R. luncheon.

Constantine was to do the floors that morning so they'd be dry in time.

Charlotte finds Constantine mopping the foyer very slowly. The effects of arthritis are apparent.

**CHARLOTTE (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

Well, the floors were soaking wet when the first guest arrived. A guest unnecessarily grabs a table for balance, making a point about the damp floor...

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION (FLASHBACK) DINING ROOM - DAY**

Charlotte sits with twelve women at the dining table as Constantine pushes the casserole cart around and begins serving lunch.

As the guests sip coffee, each woman grimaces and turns to Charlotte.

**CHARLOTTE (V.O.)**

Then, she burned the coffee. She had gotten so old, Skeeter.

Charlotte shoots Constantine a look. Constantine nods sorrowfully. She picks up a woman's plate and begins filling it with food from the cart very slowly.

Constantine strains to lower the plate in front of the

woman.

Her hands tremble.

**CHARLOTTE (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

Her mishaps were becoming a daily occurrence, and I had had it.

The plate tilts causing peas to pour into the woman's lap.

**WOMAN**

Watch out!

With that, Charlotte stands up and slaps the table with her hand.

**CHARLOTTE**

Get a hold of yourself, Constantine!

Constantine slowly looks to Charlotte. Totally exhausted, she grips the casserole cart with both hands to steady herself.

**CHARLOTTE (V.O.) (CONT'D)**

And that's when it happened.  
Constantine wets herself.  
Slowly the women begin realizing what's happening. The two women closest to Constantine gasp and quickly move away from her.  
Another woman rises from the table covering her mouth with a napkin and leaves the room.  
Just now realizing what has happened, Constantine looks down at her soiled dress. No one says a word. No one comes to Constantine's aid.  
Constantine looks to Charlotte.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD (FLASHBACK) - MOMENTS LATER**

Constantine hobbles with a cane down a gravel road still wearing her soiled dress. She turns and looks one last time at the Phelan Plantation...

**CHARLOTTE**

I told her she couldn't work here anymore and to go on home.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter trembles. Charlotte won't look at her.

**SKEETER**

How could you humiliate her like that?!

**CHARLOTTE**

I didn't mean to.

**SKEETER**

Why didn't you help her?

**CHARLOTTE**

I was upset. I didn't know what else to do.

**SKEETER**

So you just threw her away? That woman did you the biggest favor of your life. She taught me kindness and self respect and you just threw her away like a broken appliance.

Charlotte starts to cry. Skeeter isn't affected.

**114.**

**CHARLOTTE**

I didn't throw her away, Skeeter. Your daddy went to her house the very next day to give her her job back. But she had already moved to Chicago. Left everything behind.

**SKEETER**

`Cause she didn't have anything anymore. You broke her heart!

**CHARLOTTE**

Please don't do this to me, Skeeter. I feel terrible. And you have to remember, they're not like us. They are different. Charlotte gets defensive.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

And you idolized her too much! You always have!

**SKEETER**

I needed somebody to look up to. Skeeter turns to leave.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

I have to go find her. She needs me.

**CHARLOTTE**

We finally found the address of her daughter in Chicago...so we sent Carlton up there to go get Constantine. Skeeter turns back to her mother.

**SKEETER**

And?

**CHARLOTTE**

When he got there...she was dead, Eugenia. I'm so sorry, Honey. Charlotte tries to comfort her. Skeeter rejects her mother's hand.

**SKEETER**

Why didn't y'all tell me all this?

**CHARLOTTE**

I knew you'd blame me...when it wasn't my fault. It just happened, and it was so unfortunate. I'm sorry, Eugenia.

**SKEETER**

When did she die? How long had she been in Chicago?

**115.**

Charlotte pulls the white basin closer, hugs it to her side.

**CHARLOTTE**

Two weeks.  
Skeeter stands, never turning as she exits.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - PATIO - MOMENTS LATER**

Skeeter stands on the back patio crying. She slowly walks off into the yard.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Constantine's story finally made it in our book. But the reason she got fired did not. Miss Skeeter just couldn't put that kind a shame on her own mother.

**EXT. BOOKSTORE - DOWNTOWN JACKSON - SIX MONTHS LATER**

The front window of a bookstore displays many of the nation's top selling books.  
A clerk sets a tiny stack of books in the far corner.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

They printed a few thousand copies with the worst advance Miss Stein had ever seen.  
The stack is "The Help," in hardcover. It's wrapped in pale blue. A white peace dove spreads its wing under the title.

**INT. MINNY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Minny stands over the stove frying chicken as Sugar enters with the day's mail. Minny snatches the mail from her and sees an envelope from Harper and Row. Minny tears it open. Her eyes go wide.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

We got four hundred dollars. Got another four hundred when it got printed. Divided thirteen ways that came to sixty-one fifty-three a person.

Minny hugs Sugar and runs out the screen door with her check as the chicken sizzles.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Aibileen and Minny hug each other as they jump up and down with checks in hand.

**116.**

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Minny got so excited she burnt up a skillet of chicken.

**EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - FRONT PORCH - DAY**

Minny knocks on the door holding bags of groceries.

**MINNY**

Come on, Miss Celia! Get out of that bed and let me in. It's twelve noon. I did all the shopping just like you asked. The door slowly opens. Celia steps out onto the porch, looking beautiful, still dressed tacky.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Well, look at you, Miss Celia.



**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Celia leads Minny into the dining room. The table, set beautifully in silver and crystal, is covered with delicious looking casseroles and fried chicken.

**MINNY**

What's all this?

**CELIA**

I cooked it all by myself. I wanted to do something special. I wanted to say "thank you."

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Celia and Minny dine, and Minny's enjoying it.

**MINNY**

Greens got just the right amount a hock taste to `em. That's a good pot liquor, Miss Celia. Who taught you to cook like this?

Minny winks as she dunks a piece of corn bread in the greens.

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

Corn bread's happy now.  
Celia lays down her fork.

**CELIA**

Are you happy, Minny?

**MINNY**

Why you ask such a funny question?

**117.**

**CELIA**

Are you?

**MINNY**

A course I's happy. You happy too.  
Big house, big yard, good husband.

**CELIA**

You know, if I were you, I'd give it right back to him. I'd hit him

over the head with a skillet and  
tell him to go straight to hell...  
Minnie starts to protest but is tired of excuses.

**MINNIE**

Maybe I will.  
Celia jumps up.

**CELIA**

I almost forgot the dessert.  
Minnie smiles softly as Celia disappears into the kitchen.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY**

Aibileen irons as Elizabeth enters with shopping bags.  
She races to the television and turns it on. As the tube  
warms up, we hear the conclusion of a Tide commercial.  
WLBT's lunchtime show, "People Will Talk," continues.

**INTERCUT WITH STUDIO, LEEFOLT HOME, HILLY'S HOME, AND ALL  
OTHER VIEWERS' HOMES.**

**INT. WLBT TELEVISION STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER**

Jolene French sits on the set of Jackson's morning show. A  
MALE HOST watches as the show runner counts down.

**SHOW RUNNER**

Five, four, three, two, one.

**MALE HOST**

Welcome back to "People Will Talk."  
And do we have something to talk  
about. Jolene has quite a book to  
review.  
Jolene shakes her head, visibly upset.

**INT. HOLBROOK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

Hilly watches Jolene on television as her new maid,  
ERNESTINE, pours a cup of coffee with her right hand.

Ernestine's left arm is missing. The maid pickings for Hilly have gotten slim.

**HILLY**

Why are you frowning, Jolene?  
Hilly leans over and taps her television.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

You don't look cute that way.

**LEEFOLT HOUSE**

**MALE HOST**

It's called "The Help." A new book  
by an anonymous author.  
Aibileen jerks her head toward the television.

**MALE HOST (CONT'D)**

Touching and enlightening, it's  
filled with testimonials from  
Mississippi's own housekeepers.

**INT. FOOTE ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

Minnie watches transfixed as she and Celia eat dessert in front of the television.

**CELIA**

Look how cute that dress is.

**MALE HOST**

Takes place in the fictional town  
of "Niceville." The book is  
dedicated to C and T. If you're  
out there C and T, we'd love to  
have you on the show because  
Niceville sounds like Jackson, if  
you ask me.  
The host starts laughing. Jolene snaps.

**JOLENE FRENCH**

It's not Jackson! It's a disgrace  
to the South! A disgrace to good  
Southern women who've spent their  
lives taking care of their help.

**LEEFOLT HOME**

Smoke rises from the shirt Aibileen is ironing. She snaps to attention, pulls the iron off the burned shirt.

**MALE HOST**

But did you read that ending?

**JOLENE FRENCH**

I know I personally treat my help like family, and every one of my friends does the same.

119.

**MALE HOST**

**(INTO CAMERA)**

Bertha, if you're listening, I have a new found respect for what you do. And, believe me, I'll be passin' on dessert at your table!

**FOOTE LIVING ROOM**

dirty

Minnie walks like a zombie over to Celia and gathers her plate, never taking her eyes off the television.

**JOLENE FRENCH**

Do not buy this book! Ladies of Jackson, do not support slander with your husband's hard earned-Poof! Jolene disappears by way of a Seal-Lily ice cream commercial.

**HILLY'S HOME**

**HILLY**

Don't cut her off like that.

**LEEFOLT HOME**

**ELIZABETH**

What's that book called, Aibileen?

**AIBILEEN**

I...I wasn't paying attention.

**INT. BOOKSTORE - LATER THAT DAY**

Stacks of "The Help" rest on tables in the store. Elizabeth enters, pick up two copies and pulls them close to her body.

She races to the register like a teen buying a Playboy.

**TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY**

Back at the table of books, we see in rapid succession the books quickly disappearing by the hands of Jacksonians.

**INT - AIBILEEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT**

Aibileen, Skeeter and Minny sit at the table. Aibileen's phone rings off the wall, but she won't answer.

**SKEETER**

I knew nothing about it. Miss Stein's P.R. Department called the station directly.

120.

**AIBILEEN**

Ever maid callin' to say they white lady's gone and bought the book. They so scared.

**MINNY**

'One-arm-Earrestine' said Miss Leefolt brought a copy over to Miss Hilly in less than a hour. She better read it quick and start the "this ain't Jackson crusade."

**SKEETER**

Don't count on it. In her one year at Ole Miss she never cracked a book.

**MINNY**

Oh, she gone read it. Especially after that man made such a stink on the tee-vee. She gone read it.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME/HOLBROOK HOME (INTERCUT) - DAY**

Elizabeth and Hilly read the book aloud over the phone with each other. They stop and nod with speculation.

**INT. BUS - DAY**

A bus is filled with domestics en route to work. Everyone is either reading the book or having it read to them.

**INT. NURSING HOME - NIGHT**

Missus Walters reads to a group of women in the home.

**INT. PHELAN HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Charlotte lies in bed reading the book next to Robert, who is asleep. As she turns a page, her face reveals a dawning realization. Troubled, she starts to wake Robert but doesn't. Charlotte trembles as she brings the book in close to her chest. She slides down to her pillow and stares at the ceiling.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - PORCH - DUSK**

Skeeter sits on the swing with Stuart who's just arrived from the rig, still wearing his dingy work clothes.

121.

**STUART**

That month felt like a year. I missed you so much.

**SKEETER**

Me, too.

**STUART**

Skeeter, I told Daddy I'm not going back on the rig. Stuart nonchalantly pulls out a ring from his front pocket and places it in Skeeter's lap. A huge diamond is surrounded by twelve small sapphires. Skeeter's smile quickly fades as she raises the ring.

**SKEETER**

Stuart...I have to tell you something.

**STUART**

How about "yes?!" I had this with me down in New Orleans, you know. Skeeter touches Stuart's face.

**SKEETER**

I'm serious...and...you have to promise not to tell anyone.

**STUART**

Hang on. Did you say `yes'?

**SKEETER**

Yes.  
Stuart hugs Skeeter. She pulls back.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

But listen. Can I have your word? Skeeter has again ruined Stuart's big moment.

**STUART**

Sure. You have my word.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - PORCH - MOMENTS LATER**

Stuart storms off the porch, dumbfounded. Finally.

**STUART**

This is what you've been writing for the last twelve months?! What happened to the cleaning column?

**SKEETER**

I did both.

**122.**

Skeeter approaches Stuart.

**STUART**

So, the talk in town? I said they were dead wrong. Told them you were too smart to get mixed up in anything like that. Skeeter reaches to calm him. He pulls away.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

That joke you played on Hilly with the toilets. Hell, that's funny. But this? I don't understand why you did this...why you even care.

**SKEETER**

What?

**STUART**

Things are fine around here. Why stir up trouble?

**SKEETER**

I'm not stirring up trouble, Stuart. Trouble's already here.

**STUART**

I guess it is.  
Skeeter grabs his arm.

**SKEETER**

I had to tell you. You needed to know.  
Stuart shakes his head and pulls away...

**STUART**

I guess I don't really know you, Skeeter. And I can't marry somebody I don't know.  
Stuart looks down at the ring.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

That was my grandmother's.  
Skeeter hands the ring back. Stuart shoves it in his pocket.

**STUART (CONT'D)**

Don't worry. I won't tell anyone.

**SKEETER**

Just leave.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Charlotte sits in bed next to Robert who is fast asleep. She hears a door closing outside.



**CHARLOTTE**

Skeeter?! Come in here, please.  
After a few moments, Skeeter enters.

**SKEETER**

You okay? Can I get you anything?

**CHARLOTTE**

Come here, Eugenia. I want to tell  
you something.

**SKEETER**

Me, too.

**CHARLOTTE**

You go first.

**SKEETER**

Stuart proposed.

**CHARLOTTE**

Finally!

**SKEETER**

You knew?

**CHARLOTTE**

Of course. He had to ask Daddy for  
your hand.  
She lifts Skeeter's ring hand. Seeing her bare finger,  
Charlotte's smile fades. Skeeter prepares for the worst.

**SKEETER**

Just say it.

**CHARLOTTE**

What did you do?!

**SKEETER**

Nothing!  
Skeeter stands to walk away.

**CHARLOTTE**

Young lady, I'm talking to you!  
Skeeter sits back down...

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Stuart'll come around. It's a funny  
dance.  
(points to Robert )

Took this one a year. Anyway, my news. After a long talk with your daddy, I've made a decision. My health's been on the uptick these past few weeks. And I know the doctor says it's some kind of last

**STRENGTH NONSENSE-**

**124.**

Charlotte starts coughing. Skeeter hands her a tissue.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

But, as I said, I made a decision. I have decided not to die.

**SKEETER**

Oh, Momma.  
Charlotte slaps her palms as if throwing the cancer away.

**CHARLOTTE**

Too late. I tried calling Fanny Mae's so I could make your hair appointments for the next twenty years, but they wouldn't allow it. Charlotte raises Skeeter's ring finger.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

I certainly can't leave you now. Skeeter laughs and hugs her mother. Robert never stirs.

**EXT. GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Hilly drives in front of Jitney Jingle grocery store. She wears a scarf on her head and big sunglasses. One-armed Ernestine rides in the passenger seat. Hilly slows in front of the store's big glass entrance. She hurriedly waves Ernestine out of the car.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

The voters of Hinds County had spoke. Mister Holbrook wasn't gone have no political career. One-Arm Ernestine races to the storefront and removes William's campaign poster taped to the window.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Hilly reads the book in bed. William is fast asleep. Suddenly, her eyes widen, her breath becomes heavy. She slowly turns a page and freezes. Her face turns white. Hilly balls both fists, looks to the ceiling and screams louder than humanly possible.

**THE SCREAM CONTINUES OVER:**

**INT. SKEETER'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME**

Skeeter lies in bed sleeping. Her eyes pop open.

**125.**

**INT. AIBILEEN'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME**

Aibileen lies in bed sleeping. Her eyes pop open.

**INT. MINNY'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING**

Minny lies in bed sleeping. Her eyes pop open. But, this time, Hilly's scream fades as knocks at the door grow louder.

Knocking that has actually stirred Minny awake. Sugar and Kindra enter, jumping in bed with Minny.

**SUGAR**

Momma, there's a white man at our door!

**MAN (O.C.)**

Minny Jackson! Are you in there?!  
Minny covers the girls with a blanket. She puts on a robe and grabs a bat from behind the door.

**MAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)**

I can hear you. Open the door.

**INT. MINNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Minny approaches the door.

**MINNY**

Who there?

**MAN**

Johnny Foote. Minny Jackson, I want to talk to you. Open up. Minny slowly opens the door. Johnny is all smiles.

**JOHNNY**

Finally, I meet Minny Jackson... As Johnny enters, Minny raises the bat and swings. Johnny turns and stops the bat with his hand.

**JOHNNY (CONT'D)**

What the hell are you doin'?! Minny lets go of the bat and cowers on the floor, raises her hands in front of her.

**MINNY**

Please don't hurt me! My babies are in the house. Johnny drops the bat and pulls Minny up from the floor.

**JOHNNY**

Calm down, girl. I'm not here to get you.

**126.**

He suddenly throws his arms around her and squeezes hard.

**INT. MINNY'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Johnny and Minny sit at her kitchen table.

**JOHNNY**

When I finally confronted Celia about you, she told me about the baby. All of them. You saved her life.

**MINNY**

I don't know about that.

**JOHNNY**

Well, I know the day you came to our house, she started getting better. And I'm not just talking

about the cookin' either.

**MINNY**

You knew I was there?

**JOHNNY**

Fried chicken and okra on the first night? Y'all should have at least put corn pone on the table.

**MINNY**

I couldn't make you eat anymore corn pone, Mister Johnny.

**JOHNNY**

Next morning, I snuck back up to the house, peeked in the window, and there you were. Given ol' Oscar a wipe down.  
Minny smiles for the first time.

**MINNY**

So I ain't losing my job?

**JOHNNY**

You have a job with us for the rest of your life, if you want it.

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Bridge is underway at the Leefolt house with the usual suspects, except Skeeter. LOU ANN TEMPLETON has taken her place.  
Aibileen nervously pours coffee.

**JOLENE FRENCH**

I heard that Betty character might be Charlene.

**127.**

**HILLY**

It's not Jackson, and that book is garbage. I bet the whole thing's made up by some nigra.  
Aibileen begins pouring coffee into Hilly's cup.

**LOU ANN TEMPLETON**

And, Jolene, didn't your momma  
leave Cora to you in her will?

**JOLENE**

Well, yes...But that's not odd is  
it? Happens all the time, right?  
A sudden realization washes over Jolene.

**LOU ANN TEMPLETON**

Did anybody ever figured out who C  
and T are?

**HILLY**

The book is NOT ABOUT JACKSON!  
Aibileen spills a few drops of coffee on Hilly's plate.

Hilly

looks up to Aibileen slow and deliberate.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

You spilled some, Aibileen.  
Aibileen takes the cloth from the coffee pitcher handle and  
dabs the spilled coffee.  
Aibileen glances at Hilly. A secret burns between them.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

Get me a new plate. One you  
haven't soiled with a dirty cloth.

**EXT. MOUNT ZION CHURCH - EVENING**

Aibileen and Minny walk into the church parking lot wearing  
their Sunday best.  
Minny takes note of all the cars.

**MINNY**

We late? Looks like Bible study  
done already started.

**AIBILEEN**

No. We ain't late.

**INT. MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER**

As Minny and Aibileen enter the church. Four-hundred members  
stand at once. The congregation begins to clap.

Minnie and Aibileen look around trying to figure out the source of adulation. They both start clapping too. Aibileen steps up to a woman in the last pew.

**AIBILEEN**

Who we clappin' for?  
The woman laughs.

**WOMAN**

Honey, we clappin' for you.  
The woman raises a copy of "The Help." Aibileen notices a copy of the book in each member's hand.  
Aibileen looks to Minny, realizing she's in on it.  
A REVEREND approaches, hands Aibileen a copy of the book.

**REVEREND**

Aibileen, this is an important time for you and our church. We know you couldn't put your name in here, so we all signed our own.  
The Reverend then hands her a box wrapped in white paper, tied with a blue ribbon.

**REVEREND (CONT'D)**

This is for the white lady. Tell her we love her like family.

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Skeeter sits between Aibileen and Minny on the sofa thumbing through her signed book.  
Hundreds of signatures cover the pages.

**AIBILEEN**

Churches over two counties signed our books. All for you and me.  
Aibileen points to the inside back cover.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Doctor King signed it, too. He readin' our book.  
Aibileen glances proudly at the framed portrait of Dr. King.

**MINNY**

We did something. We did something good.

**SKEETER**

It's beautiful.

Skeeter closes the book and sets it down regretfully.

**129.**

**AIBILEEN**

What's wrong?  
Skeeter pulls a letter out of her purse.

**SKEETER**

I got a job offer from Harper and Row...in New York.

**AIBILEEN**

Congratulations!

**MINNY**

That real good, Miss Skeeter.

**SKEETER**

I not taking it. I just wanted to share it with you both. There's no one else I can tell.

**AIBILEEN**

What you mean you not takin' it?  
This is what you been dreaming of.

**SKEETER**

I can't leave you two right when things are getting bad from a mess I created. I set out to write a book to make white people thankful. But in the end, what we should say is "sorry."

**AIBILEEN**

If bad things happen, they ain't nothing you can do about it. And if they happen, at least now theys a reason behind it. A reason we can wrap our heads around and be proud of...  
Skeeter nods with little relief.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

Now, I don't mean to rub salt in your wound, but...you ain't got a good life here in Jackson. Plus, your momma's getting better-  
Minny aggressively chimes in.



**MINNY**

You ain't got nothing left here but  
enemies in the Junior League. You  
done burned ever bridge there is.  
And you ain't never gone get  
another man in this town, and ever  
body know it. So don't walk your  
white butt to New York, RUN IT!  
Minny leans over, placing her hand on Skeeter's for the  
first  
time since knowing each other.

**130.**

**MINNY (CONT'D)**

And you listen to me. I'm on take  
care a Aibileen, and she gone take  
care a me.  
Skeeter nods.

**AIBILEEN**

Go find your life, Miss Skeeter.

**EXT. PHELAN PLANTATION - NIGHT**

Skeeter stands next to the barn smoking a cigarette reading  
the Harper and Row offer for the hundredth time.  
Tires crunch gravel down the drive. Skeeter sees a car  
moving toward her with the headlights off.  
Worried, Skeeter looks toward her home. Charlotte can be  
seen in an upstairs window.  
Skeeter soon recognizes the car as Hilly's.  
Hilly parks, lights a cigarette and gets out of her car.  
Skeeter charges toward her.

**SKEETER**

What are you doing here?  
Hilly screams and throws her lit cigarette at Skeeter.

**HILLY**

Don't you get an inch closer!  
Hilly's a mess. Her shirt is half tucked. Her shorts strain  
to contain a newly developed layer of fat.  
A horrible fever blister burns hot on Hilly's upper lip.

**HILLY (CONT'D)**

I've contacted my lawyer, Hibbie

Goodman. He's the best libel attorney in Mississippi. You're in big trouble, Missy. And you're going to jail.

**SKEETER**

You can't prove anything, Hilly.

**HILLY**

I one-hundred-percent know you wrote it `cause nobody else in town is as tacky as you. Those nigras of yours are in a lifetime of trouble.

**SKEETER**

Exactly who are you talking about? You don't know anything.

**131.**

**HILLY**

I don't, do I? You tell Aibileen, the next time she wants to write about my dear friend Elizabeth...uh-huh. Remember her? Had you in her wedding? Let's just say, Aibileen ought to've been a little bit smarter before putting in the L-shaped crack in poor Elizabeth's dining table. And that nigra, Minny? Do I have plans for her.

**SKEETER**

Careful, Hilly. Don't give yourself away now.

**HILLY**

That was not me WHO ATE THAT PIE!  
Hilly storms up the porch steps. Skeeter follows.

**SKEETER**

I did not invite you here!  
Skeeter yanks Hilly's arm hard.

**HILLY**

I've come to tell your mother what a hippie you've become. She's gonna be disgusted by you.  
Skeeter can't help but laugh.

**SKEETER**

You're telling my mother on me?  
Hilly opens the door. Skeeter grabs her. They struggle.

**SKEETER (CONT'D)**

You get out of here!  
Charlotte suddenly appears. Skeeter lets go of Hilly.

**CHARLOTTE**

Why, Hilly...It's been such a long  
time, Dear. Everything okay, you  
two?  
Hilly is shocked by Charlotte's frail appearance.

**HILLY**

Missus Phelan, I'm...I'm here to-

**CHARLOTTE**

Hilly, you're a mess. Are you ill?  
Hilly self-consciously licks her fever blister.

**HILLY**

Well, I...I didn't have time to get  
fixed up before-

**132.**

**CHARLOTTE**

Darling, no husband wants to come  
home and see this.  
Charlotte peers closely at Hilly's cold sore.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

And that...that is horrendous.

**HILLY**

Missus Phelan, I'm here-

**CHARLOTTE**

You know, Hilly. If I didn't know  
any better, I'd say you've been  
eating too many...SWEETS?  
Hilly's face turns purple with embarrassment. Charlotte  
moves in for the kill.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

In fact. I'm sure of it. Now GET  
OUT OF MY HOUSE...before we all get  
one of those on our lip.  
Hilly looks back and forth between Skeeter and her mother,

not knowing what to say.  
Hilly runs out of the house as Charlotte sashays quietly  
into  
the living room.  
Shocked, Skeeter stands alone in the foyer. Hilly sprays  
gravel across the Phelan yard as she speeds away.

**CHARLOTTE (O.C.) (CONT'D)**  
Eugenia?

**SKEETER**  
Yes, Ma'am.

**CHARLOTTE (O.C.)**  
Come in here, please.  
Skeeter gulps as she heads toward the living room.

**INT. PHELAN PLANTATION - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Charlotte pats the sofa as Skeeter enters and sits.

**SKEETER**  
Ma'am?

**CHARLOTTE**  
Do you have plans tomorrow? Bible  
study? Anything like that?

**SKEETER**  
No, Ma'am.

133.

**CHARLOTTE**  
Good. We're going shopping.  
Skeeter lets out a big sigh of relief.

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**  
`Cause no single daughter of mine  
is going to New York, representing  
the great state of Mississippi,  
without a proper cosmopolitan  
wardrobe.

**SKEETER**  
What?

**CHARLOTTE**

I'm very proud of you, Eugenia.

**SKEETER**

How do you know about New York?

**CHARLOTTE**

A friend of Constantine's told me.  
Charlotte reaches down and pulls up her copy of "The Help".

**CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)**

Would you do me the honor of  
signing my copy?  
Skeeter nods. Charlotte hands Skeeter a pen. Her hand  
trembles as she signs the book, never having guessed how  
it would feel.

good

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING**

Aibileen washes dishes as the phone begins to ring. She  
answers. Minny screams on the other end of the line.

**EXT. GAS STATION (INTERCUT) - SAME TIME**

Minny stands barefoot inside a phone booth, her lip swollen,  
face bleeding. Her kids stand outside, crying.

**MINNY**

They fired Leroy last night! And  
when Leroy ask why, his boss say  
Mister Holbrook told him to do it.  
Said his nigger wife the reason.

**AIBILEEN**

Oh, Law!

**MINNY**

He try to kill me with he bare  
hands! He threw the kids in the  
yard, lock me in the bathroom, and  
say he gone set the house on fire.

134.

**AIBILEEN**

Where are you now?!

**MINNY**

The gas station. I climbed out the window, and we all ran here.

**AIBILEEN**

I'm on come there now.

**MINNY**

Wait, Aibileen...I'm pregnant.

**AIBILEEN**

Minny, now, you listen to me. That baby gone be fine, and you ain't never gone lose your job. Mister Johnny told you that hisself. They's more book money coming. Your baby ain't gone know about gettin' beat. You hear me? You free, Minny! You are free. Minny lets out a chuckle of relief and wipes her eyes.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

You hear me?

**MINNY**

I hear you...  
The Leefolt front door opens. Elizabeth calls out.

**ELIZABETH (O.C.)**

Aibileen?

**INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Aibileen enters to find Elizabeth and Hilly staring at her. Elizabeth is two weeks WAY PAST DUE.

**AIBILEEN**

Good morning.  
Hilly licks her cold sore as she steps forward. She glides her hand across the L-shaped crack in the Elizabeth's table, drawing Aibileen's attention to it.

**HILLY**

Aibileen, the silver I lent Elizabeth last week.

**AIBILEEN**

It not polished good? Humidity been fighting me on polishing day.

**HILLY**

When you returned it, three pieces were missing out of the felt wrapper. A fork and two spoons.

135.

**AIBILEEN**

Lemme...lemme go look in the kitchen, maybe I left some behind.

**HILLY**

You know as well as I do that silver's not in the kitchen. Aibileen turns to Elizabeth.

**AIBILEEN**

You check in Mae Mobley's bed? She been putting things-

**HILLY**

Do you hear her, Elizabeth? She's trying to blame it on a toddler. Elizabeth won't look at Aibileen.

**AIBILEEN**

I ain't stole no silver. Elizabeth whispers to Hilly.

**ELIZABETH**

She says she doesn't have them.

**HILLY**

Then it behooves me to inform you that you are fired, Aibileen. And I'll be calling the police. They know me. Mae Mobley enters the room.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Aibee, my froat hurts. Mae Mobley coughs.

**AIBILEEN**

I go get her some syrup, Miss Leefolt.

**HILLY**

Elizabeth can take care of her

child.  
Elizabeth looks to Hilly, appearing somewhat upset with this suggestion.

**ELIZABETH**

I'll go get the couch syrup.  
Hilly glares at Aibileen as Elizabeth runs down the hall.

**HILLY**

I won't tolerate liars!  
Mae Mobley becomes scared and hides behind Aibileen's leg.

**136.**

**AIBILEEN**

I didn't steal no silver.

**HILLY**

I'm not talking about silver. I'm talking about those things you wrote about Elizabeth. Maybe I can't send you to jail for what you wrote, but I can send you to jail for being a thief. And your friend, Minny? That nigra's got a nice surprise coming to her. Johnny Foote listens to what I say. She's as good as-  
Aibileen shouts, interrupting Hilly.

**AIBILEEN**

Woman!...I know something about you. Don't you forget that.  
Hilly narrows her eyes.

**AIBILEEN (CONT'D)**

From what Yule May says, they's a lot a time to write letters from jail. Plenty a time to write ever person in Jackson the truth about you, and the paper is free.

**HILLY**

Nobody would believe something you wrote.

**AIBILEEN**

I don't know. Already sold a lot a books.  
Fear floods into Hilly's eyes.



**HILLY**

Get out of here!

**MAE MOBLEY**

Don't go, Aibiee!  
Aibileen kneels down as Elizabeth returns with the syrup.

**AIBILEEN**

Baby, you need to get back to bed.  
You got a fever.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Noooo! Don't go, Aibee. Please  
don't leave.

**AIBILEEN**

I gots to, Baby. I am so sorry.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Why? Are you going to take care of  
another little girl?

**137.**

**AIBILEEN**

No, Baby, that's not the reason. I  
don't want to leave you, but...It's  
time for me to retire. You my last  
little girl.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Noooo!

**AIBILEEN**

Baby Girl, I need you to remember  
ever thing I told you. Okay? Do  
you remember what I told you?

**MAE MOBLEY**

To wipe my bottom good?

**AIBILEEN**

No, Baby. The other. What you  
are.

**MAE MOBLEY**

You is kind. You is smart. You is  
important.

**AIBILEEN**

That's right, Baby Girl.  
Aibileen squeezes Mae Mobley for the last time. They both cry together. Hilly speaks up.

**HILLY**

You need to go now, Aibileen!  
Aibileen rises up from Mae Mobley and turns to Elizabeth.

**AIBILEEN**

Give my sweet girl a chance.  
Elizabeth avoids eye contact. Aibileen turns and walks away.  
As Elizabeth leans down to pick up Mae Mobley...HER WATER BREAKS. She glares at Hilly with shock and regret.

**EXT. LEEFOLT HOME - MOMENTS LATER**

Aibileen steps out of the house with her purse.  
She walks stoically down the driveway. Tears stream down her face.  
Mae Mobley runs to the living room window crying. She beats on the glass from inside.

**MAE MOBLEY**

Aibeeeeee! Don't go!  
Aibileen never turns.

**138.**

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Mae Mobley was my last baby. In just thirty minutes, I felt like my whole life was done. Of the thirteen maids, seven of us got fired. Several other maids got fired who had nothin' to do with our book. Guess our stories weren't so unique after all...But, like Minny, we was all free.

**INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - FOYER - DAY**

Hilly, even fatter now, sifts through the day's mail.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

And we's was a lot freer than Hilly

Holbrook.  
She comes across a piece from Celia Foote addressed to The Starving Children of Africa Fund. A smug smile forms. She opens the envelope to find a check for \$200.00 made out to: TWO-SLICE HILLY!  
Hilly screams as she rips the check into pieces.

**EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - YARD - DAY**

Minnie folds laundry on a picnic table.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Ever so often, we all get a nice piece of book money in the mail. `Manna from heaven' we like to call it.  
Minnie looks across the table and smiles at Celia who is holding and playing with Minnie's newborn child.

**EXT. CHICAGO - GRAVEYARD - DAY**

Close on tombstone:

**CONSTANTINE JEFFERSON**

Born December 24th 1883

Died March 15th, 1963

A bouquet of flowers lay at the foot of the tombstone. A copy of "The Help" leans against it.

In the distance, a cab slowly pulls away with Skeeter

inside.

**139.**

**INT. AIBILEEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY**

Aibileen sits at her kitchen table, typing on Skeeter's old typewriter. We watch as keys write out the rest of Aibileen's voice over.

**AIBILEEN (V.O.)**

Thousands of our books went out all over the world. We had got paid to tell the truth and we just couldn't believe it...

Aibileen takes this last page out of the typewriter and places it behind two hundred other typed out pages. She looks up to the framed picture of Treelore and rises from the table with pride.

**INT. HARPER AND ROW - SKEETER'S OFFICE - NEW YORK - DAY**

Skeeter smiles as she reads from a book in her corner office. The Manhattan skyline rises behind her. She wears Pucci. Her hair is perfectly styled. She looks gorgeous. She sets the book down on her desk and picks up the phone. The book's cover reads:  
"All My Babies"  
By Aibileen Clark  
Next to the book is a glass box. Constantine's corn pipe rests inside.

**AIBILEEN'S NEW HOME - LIVING ROOM - FIFTEEN YEARS LATER**

Aibileen, 70, rises from a sofa. Her hair is gray. Reading glasses hang on a chain from around her neck. As she begins a slow walk down the hall, we see the surroundings of her new home for the first time. It's much bigger, well furnished and beautiful. She passes a study lined with shelves of books. A copy of "The Help" and "All My Babies" are placed side by side. At the end of the hall, Aibileen approaches the opened door of a brightly lit, sparkling white, bathroom. She enters the bathroom and closes the door.