

30 INT. TIFFY FARM KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A nervous African slave woman named RUTH (20s) carries a steaming silver tea set on a tray into the kitchen. She sets it on the table before a wiry, long-faced man, MATTHEW TIFFY, who eyes her with lust as she shakily sets the tray on a table before him. Mary, sitting across from Tiffy, notes the woman's quivering hand as she pours the tea.

TIFFY

Certainly you are aware of our misfortunes at sea.

As the slave walks off, Mary notices bloody streaks seeping through the back of her dress.

MARY

I've not come after this year's land rent, but last year's.

Tiffy scoffs as he picks up his tea.

TIFFY

Yes, well, the drought and the hostilities in the Ohio have left the whole of our country in a most wretched state.

Mary suddenly drops her heavy ring of keys on the table with a CRASH, startling Tiffy, then picks up the silver teacup.

MARY

Pray tell, Mr. Tiffy, I have heard that ye spent the summer in Williamsburg, swilling and attending the theater - so I'll hear none of your tales of hardship.

TIFFY

They be not tales, madam.

MARY

I shall not leave today until your account is settled.

TIFFY

I simply have not what is owed. For that I am truly sorry, and I beg your mercy.