

Harriet Tubman



Script

Characters

Harriet – Harriet Tubman

Mrs Pattison – Harriet's owner (also plays Townsfolk 1)

Shopkeeper – runs the shop (also plays Townsfolk 2)

Fred – recently bought by Mrs Pattison (also plays Townsfolk 3)

Overseer – works for Mrs Pattison, overseeing the enslaved workers

A baby is crying in the cradle in the Pattison farm house. Harriet enters and rocks the cradle.

Harriet: Shhh shh baby, go to sleep.

Baby cries harder.

Harriet: Pleeese baby go to sleep! Your mama will hear you and...

Mrs Pattison enters

Mrs Pattison: What are you doing to my baby?!

Harriet: Sorry ma'am.

Mrs Pattison goes over and quiets the baby.

Mrs Pattison: Shh shh now, it's alright, mama's here. [*The baby is quiet*]. I have really tried with you Harriet, but you are a useless, lazy girl. I'm half minded to sell you. Make yourself useful, for once, and fetch me a bag of flour from town.

Harriet: Yes m'am. Sorry m'am.

Mrs Pattison: Be quick about it. Or you'll really be in trouble.

Harriet walks along the hot, dusty road. She fans herself. She looks at the birds flying overhead.

Harriet: I wish I were a bird. I wish I could just spread my wings and fly away from here.

Townsfolk 1: Fine day we're having.

Townsfolk 2: It's a hot one!

Townsfolk 3: I'm just heading into the store.

Harriet lets the townsfolk and Overseer enter the store before her, then she heads in.

Shopkeeper: What you want, girl?

Harriet: Flour for Mrs Pattison....

The Shopkeeper scowls at her

Harriet: ...if it's no bother.

Shopkeeper: Over there. No dawdling, I won't have your kind loitering.

Harriet looks for flour when suddenly Fred bumps into her.

Fred: Please let me through!

Shopkeeper: He's trying to escape!

Overseer: Stop that slave!

Fred: Harriet, don't let him get me!

Harriet blocks the doorway.

Fred: Thank you!

Overseer: [to Harriet] Get out of my way!

The Overseer (mimes) picking up a heavy weight from a shelf.

Overseer: I said move, slave!

He throws the (imaginary) weight and hits Harriet in the head. She falls. Fred is gone.

It's night. Harriet lays on the ground, passed out. She dreams that the Overseer, Shopkeeper and Fred are standing around her.

Overseer: If she wakes up, Mrs Pattison will sell her for sure.

Shopkeeper: Trouble-makers, the lot of them.

Fred: I won't forget you, Harriet.

The Overseer, the Shopkeeper and Fred lie down, becoming other sleeping workers at the farm. Harriet wakes up. She feels her head and looks at her hand; blood.

Harriet: Fred..?

Harriet checks those asleep around her.

Harriet: He made it. He got away. To the north, to the promised land.

Harriet carefully gets up. She ties a scarf around her head to stop the bleeding.

Harriet: If she sells me, where will I go? Where will I end up? [pause] What did the Overseer call me? A slave. [she writes it out in the dirt]. My mama said that our people, our ancestors, were called queen, elder, sister... before they were stolen.

Harriet looks at the word and rubs it out with her foot. She bends and writes HARRIET in its place.

Harriet: Mama said I'm good and clever and brave. She told me no one can own a person's spirit. That means it can't be bought or sold either. I can't be bought or sold. [pause] There's freedom in the north. There are others like me up there. My people. If I stay, who will I be?

Harriet looks around at the farm.

Harriet: Go free or die. Those are the only options as far as I can see.

A bird calls in the sky. Harriet smiles up at it. She takes a long, deep breath.

Harriet: I know what I have to do. Spread my wings. Fly away north. Escape to freedom.

Harriet finds the North star in the sky and takes her first few steps...