

(Everybody except the young man, Juana and Caridad have gone with the caravan. Caridad remains in the living-room near the door. Juana, at the end of the road watches the procession disappear. From a distance the murmur of voices and the noise of musical instruments can be heard. After a few seconds Juana says to her daughter:)

JUANA: Get the washing we took from the line last night. It looks as if we'll have some sun this afternoon.

(Looks at the sky and passes her hand over her head, then joins the caravan. The child moves her hand over her face, near her eyes, as if to dry a tear. Takes a bundle of white clothes that is near her and moves to the street. She meets the young man and looks at him. Crushing the bundle to her chest she asks him:)

CARIDAD: Do you think the sun will shine?

(The young man looks into her eyes, smiles softly, and nods. The girl smiles, unties the bundle of white clothes and helped by the young man, starts hanging them. Both of them smile happily. Brilliant music is heard. As the

CURTAIN FALLS.)

THE BLACK JACOBINS

C.L.R. James

Trinidad

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

The Prologue:

A Barber

A Lady

Henri Christophe

Jean-Jacques Dessalines

Toussaint L'Ouverture

Madame L'Ouverture

Slaves, white men, drummers, etc.

The Play:

Madame Bullet

Marie-Jeanne

Moïse L'Ouverture

Jean-Jacques Dessalines

Toussaint L'Ouverture

Marat, aide to Dessalines

Max, aide to Moïse

Orleans, aide to Christophe

Mars Plaisir, civilian aide to Toussaint

X Marquis D'Hermona, a Spanish General

Aide to the Spanish General

First Servant

Second Servant

✓ Tobias Lear, American Consul

✓ General Hédouville of the French Army

General Maitland of the British Army

Henri Christophe

Secretary to Maitland

Celestine, maid to Marie-Jeanne

Colonel Vincent of the French Army

General Bonaparte, First Consul of France

A guard

A secretary to Bonaparte

Samedi Smith, a brigand

A mulatto Officer

A French officer

✓ Cathcart

Slaves, soldiers, dancers, drummers, musicians (violinist, flautist, mandolinist.)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

All scenes take place in French San Domingo (now the Republic of Haiti)
except Act II Scene III

THE PROLOGUE: The Slaves, The Barber, The Thief, The Entertainer
The Waiter, The Courier, The Leader.

THE PLAY:

ACT I

Scene I Living Room of M. Bullet, a plantation owner: 1791.

Scene II Military Headquarters of General Toussaint L'Ouverture: 1794.

Scene III Living Room of Tobias Lear, the American Consul: 1798.

Scene IV Governor L'Ouverture's Headquarters, General Maitland's
Headquarters : 1798.

ACT II

Scene I Bedroom of Marie-Jeanne: 1800

Scene II Headquarters of Toussaint L'Ouverture: 1800

Scene III Office of General Bonaparte, Les Tuileries, Paris, France: 1800

Scene IV Headquarters of Toussaint L'Ouverture: 1802

ACT III

Scene I Headquarters of Dessalines: 1802

Scene II Headquarters of Dessalines: 1803

THE BLACK JACOBINS

The stage is divided into four areas. There is a main central area, two smaller areas one on each side, and a large area upstage for crowds, banner-bearers, etc. The upstage area is outdoors. In the Prologue it is used for the slaves in silhouette. In the play it is possible that crowds may assemble at the back and be spoken to from the back of the main central area. Crowds say little but their presence is felt powerfully at all critical moments. This is the key point of the play and comments cannot, must not, be written. It must be felt, dramatically, and be projected as essential to action in the downstage areas. From the beginning, the stage is set for Act I, Scene I of the play. The Prologue takes place in and around the setting.

PROLOGUE

Drums begin in blackout. After two phrases, the night sky is illumined.

THE SLAVES

Silhouetted against it are five slaves chained together at the waist. They mime digging with spades. They sing:

Eh! Eh! Bomba! Heu! Heu!
Canga bafio te!
Canga moune de le
Canga, do ki la
Canga, li
(Repeat)

An overseer cracks the whip to stop them. They stop singing and freeze. Blackout. Drums continue for two phrases and stop.

THE BARBER

Lights come up immediately in the central area. (The slaves upstage are still in place, immobile.) A lady sits on a low chair. A well-dressed barber is supervising four slaves. They are dressing the lady's hair. Two stand in attendance; the third, who has been curling it, steps back. The fourth slave steps forward to add the finishing touches and, in doing so, undoes one curl. The lady gives a small cry of disappointment as this happens. The barber, who has been supervising, boxes the face of the fourth slave until he falls to the ground. He cowers as the barber reverses his riding crop. . . The third slave has mended the damage to the coiffure quickly. The second slave has presented a mirror. The lady smiles and sighs aloud. The barber turns, goes to the lady,

pushes away the second slave with his crop, and smiles and bows. The third slave picks up the fourth. They all stand numbly. The barber gracefully accepts the fee and leaves stage left in a flourish. The light fades. Drums start again in blackout. After two phrases the sky is illumined.

THE SLAVES

The five silhouetted slaves mime digging with pickaxes. They sing:

Eh! Eh! Bomba! Heu! Heu!
 White man - vow to destroy
 Take his riches away
 Kill them
 Every one
 Canga Li.

The overseer cracks his whip. They stop singing and freeze. Blackout. Drums continue for two phrases and stop.

THE THIEF

The lights come up immediately in the area on stage left. (The slaves upstage are still in place, immobile.) A slave is kneeling with his face on the ground. He is held by another slave. A white man stands left of them. Another stands in front of the kneeling slave. There is a sack under the piano behind him. The latter white man speaks: This is outrageous. You have been stealing my neighbour's chickens? (He hands the neighbour a cat-o-nine-tails.) Here you are, my dear M. Millet, you may watch him receive one hundred lashes. (The neighbour takes the whip and hands it to the standing slave. The kneeling slave is jerked to his feet and marched off. The neighbour follows. The white man goes to the door, looks after them, then turns and claps his hands twice. His house slave appears from stage right. The white man points to the sack. The slave picks it up. A chicken clucks from within. The white man says:) For a change, Madame and I will eat some fried chicken tonight. (The slave bows as the lights fade. Drums start again in blackout. After two phrases, the sky is illumined.)

THE SLAVE

The five silhouetted slaves pass heavy boulders slowly from one to the other. They hum the tune of the previous song, slowly and softly. The overseer cracks the whip. They stop humming and freeze; the slaves are bent over with the weight of the boulders. Blackout. Drums continue

for two phrases and stop.

THE ENTERTAINER

The lights come up immediately in the small area on stage right. (The slaves upstage have disappeared.) Two white men are talking. One is saying: . . . and when the dancing is over, as a grand finale, we take that old one of mine who has been sick (The other catches on and mimes an action with three fingers of his right hand shoved down a circle made by the thumb and fingers of his left hand), fill him with gunpowder, and blow him to Kingdom Come! (The other has moved his hands apart with the imagined explosion and they both laugh raucously at this as the lights fade slowly to blackout. Drums start; after two phrases, they stop.)

THE HOTEL

Lights come up in the stage left area. A waiter, Henri Christophe, is serving drinks to three white men in an Hotel lobby.

WHITE MAN A: Imagine! Only six deputies for San Domingo! The States-General in France must be crazy.

WHITE MAN B: It was Mirabeau from that black-loving club. "The Friends of the Negro." He had the effrontery to say that if our blacks could not vote, and could be counted in the census, then there were mules and horses in France which could not vote and could be counted in their census.

WHITE MAN C: So unfair! Everyone knows that animals are worth more than blacks.

(The others are in accord. The lights fade. A spot remains on Christophe, standing to one side. His face is impassive. Then that spot also fades to blackout.)

THE FOREST

A patter of drums begins calling for a gathering. The sky is illumined. A blue light comes up in the upstage area where the slaves had been working. Flambeaux light the forest clearing as slaves converge around a speaker standing on a platform. He punctuates his phrases with gasps for breath. Drums fade out.

SPEAKER: My brothers, I have been running all night to tell you. The slaves of the French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique are fighting their masters. The white slaves in France are fighting their masters. You here in Fort Dauphin, you who have toiled in the fields and got no reward except lashes with the whip; the land belongs to you, your blood and sweat is mixed in the earth. You must join your brothers in revolt, we must fight. . . (*Two shots ring out. The speaker falls dead. The slaves scatter with their lights. A lone light remains on the fallen speaker with one member of the crowd - Dessalines - bent over him.*)

DESSALINES: (*He looks up with determination and hate on his face. He raises a fist to the sky and shouts.*) We will kill them all. Every one. (*The spot fades to blackout. Silence.*)

THE LEADER

The lights come up on the area stage right. Toussaint L'Ouverture is sitting in a rustic armchair with a book open on his lap. His head is at rest and he stares into the night. His wife enters behind him.

MME. L'OUVERTURE. Old man, why don't you come to bed. It is late.

TOUSSAINT: I can't sleep. There is something frightening in the air. And I have just opened my Raynal to read an even more frightening thing. The book just opened and I looked. The Abbe is saying: "A courageous chief only is wanted." I have read it a thousand times before, but it is as if I had seen it for the first time.

MME. L'OUVERTURE: Toussaint, you still feel this destiny for great things.

TOUSSAINT: Yes, I do. For a long time. Ever since the slave uprisings began. But *what* "great things?"

MME. L'OUVERTURE: Come to bed, Old Toussaint. You're tired.

TOUSSAINT: In a little while. (*Madame L'Ouverture exits. Toussaint looks into the book again, then looks up as the lights fade to a solitary spot on him.*) "A courageous chief only is wanted." (*The light fades to blackout.*)

ACT I SCENE 1: OCTOBER 1971

The living-room of M. Bullet, owner of a slave plantation and many slaves, including Toussaint L'Ouverture. The plantation is a few score miles outside Le Cap, the capital of the French colony of San Domingo in the Caribbean. The slave revolution has broken out in August. The island is in turmoil. The time is about half-past two in the afternoon. Madame Bullet is playing a Mozart aria on the piano and singing it. The aria is from Don Giovanni Act I: "Vendetta ti chieggió, la chiede il tuo cor."

MME BULLET. I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it,
your heart demands it.
Remember the wounds in that poor breast,
Recall the ground, covered, covered with blood,
Should the fury of a just anger, of a just anger
wane in you . . .

I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it,
your heart demands it.
Remember the wounds, recall the blood,
I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it,
I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it . . .

(The lights come up after the first few bars of this to reveal Madame Bullet at the piano in the central area. At one side of the piano is her companion, a mulatto slave, Marie-Jeanne. Marie-Jeanne is humming, sometimes singing, a phrase when it is often repeated, perhaps in descant. While this is going on, there is, upstage, a subdued humming of "La Marseillaise," "To arms, citizens" seem to be the only words known. There is much repetition, omission, etc., but on the whole the slaves manage a tolerable rendition of the anthem.)

MME. BULLET: Oh, Marie-Jeanne, I wish you could have been with us. Vienna was lovely. Vienna! Some years ago we were lucky enough to be visiting Prague and quite by accident we heard his *Marriage of Figaro*. This time as soon as we reached Paris, we heard that Mozart had written a new opera, *Don Giovanni*. *(She stands and moves downstage.)* After a few days we heard that *Don Giovanni* was to be performed in Vienna. My husband is a good man. He knew I was dying to hear it and we set off for Vienna almost at once.

(Enter a youth, Moïse.)

MOISE: Madame, M. Bullet is here.

(M. Bullet enters. He wears riding boots and carries a whip. He and his wife embrace, she more ardently than he. The couple break apart and Bullet casts a more-than-interested eye on Marie-Jeanne who has gone slowly to the other end of the room. Madame Bullet looks at each in turn. As soon as she leaves the room, Bullet goes to Marie-Jeanne and embraces her. She submits willingly but is not responsive. The two are still locked together when the half-naked Dessalines enters carrying a drawn sword. He is followed by two or three equally raggedly dressed slaves carrying staves. Upstage there is a growing murmur of a mass of slaves.)

DESSALINES: *(in a menacing tone)* Master.

(Bullet and Marie-Jeanne draw apart. Bullet is immediately furious, but restrains himself.)

BULLET: What are you doing in here, Dessalines?

(Dessalines steps forward cautiously but definitely, separating Bullet from Marie-Jeanne. He is obviously interested in Marie-Jeanne.)

DESSALINES: Revolution in France. Revolution in San Domingo. Freedom for slaves. Kill Master. Burn down plantation.

(Bullet stands looking at him. Madame Bullet has come to the door, seen what was happening and turned back rapidly.)

BULLET: Well, it has come as last.

(Dessalines turns to the slaves and makes a gesture. More slaves pour in. They start to pull down curtains, etc.)

MARIE-JEANNE: Dessalines. Toussaint! Does Toussaint know what you are doing?

(Dessalines is taken aback. The slaves pause and grow silent. Madame Bullet returns with Toussaint behind her. Toussaint's dress is commonplace, but tidy and neat. He steps forward, all eyes centred on him. He looks around and then speaks.)

TOUSSAINT: Dessalines, put that sword away. *(For a moment Dessalines, rebellious, does not know what to do with the sword.)* Give it to Moise.

(Dessalines meekly hands over the sword to Moïse.) M. Bullet, you know that the slave revolution broke out in San Domingo over a month ago. All over the North slaves have set fire to the plantations and killed their masters. Now they are free. M. Bullet, you must leave here at once and never return. Otherwise I cannot guarantee your safety. *(Bullet looks at his wife.)* Madame Bullet I shall send by a special guard, with Moïse here and my brother Paul. They will take her to her friends in Le Cap. *(To Madame Bullet.)* You will be quite safe with them. You will take certain household effects with you. In two carriages. More than that I cannot do. As for you, Marie-Jeanne, you have to choose. My wife and the children are going to a safe spot in Spanish San Domingo. You can go with my wife or you can go with Madame Bullet to Le Cap. You have to decide now. What will you do?

(Marie-Jeanne, now the centre of attention, is quite composed.)

MARIE-JEANNE: Toussaint, will I be safe from him? *(Pointing to Dessalines)*

TOUSSAINT: *(with a glance at M. Bullet)* If I am taking care of you, you will be safe from everybody.

MARIE-JEANNE: Then I will go with your wife.

(She turns and walks out, without even a glance at the Bullets. Madame Bullet looks at her husband not without malice.)

TOUSSAINT: M. Bullet, I propose to you that you go now. At once. From your camp you will be able to visit Madame Bullet in Le Cap. She will be there tonight by seven o'clock. *(Bullet hesitates for a moment, then leaves. The slaves watch him malevolently. Toussaint turns to Madame Bullet.)* Madame will please get ready to leave for Le Cap with your two carriages by four o'clock. *(Madame Bullet hesitates)* Madame, the life on this plantation is finished.

(Still Madame Bullet does not leave. Finally she speaks:)

MME. BULLET: Toussaint, what is going to happen to you? You have arranged for everyone. But you, where are you going?

(Toussaint looks at her, looks away and then looks at her again.)

TOUSSAINT: Madame, I am going where I belong: to join the revolution for London

MME. BULLET: I always knew you would. But you have been very kind to us. I will remember you. Goodbye, Toussaint.

(To the astonishment of all the slaves around, she moves her hand up towards Toussaint's lips. He hesitates for a fraction of a second, then takes her hand in his own and kisses it. At this there is tremendous excitement from the slaves. The light fades on Madame Bullet's exit up the stairs at stage right.)

ACT 1 SCENE II – 1794

Three soldiers are discovered removing the remaining signs of French Colonial gentility from the central area. They are replacing the furnishings with severely functional furniture. They are wearing some semblance of a uniform.

MARAT: All this goddamn furniture to be moved. This is work for slaves.

MAX: They ain't got no more slaves.

MARAT: All right. Not slaves, but fellas to do heavy work. I am a soldier. I am free. What is the use of being free and having to move a piano. When I was a slave I had to move the piano. Now I am free I have to move the piano.

MAX: You used to move the piano for M. Bullet. Now it is for General L'Ouverture.

MARAT: The piano is still a piano and as heavy as hell. *(They take the piano off.)*

(Enter Mars Plaisir, civilian attendant to Toussaint. He is neatly dressed. Max and Marat return with a low bench.)

MARS PLAISIR: The General will be here very soon and you have not prepared the place for his military staff. You, Paul, you promised me.

MARAT: No! Not Paul! Paul was a slave. I told you my name is Marat. That is the name Master Dessalines said I could take. My name is Marat.

(Orleans returns and sets down a Spanish flag.)

MAX: We have no masters any more. You are the Military Aide to Captain Dessalines, Jean is Military Aide to Captain Christophe, and I am Military Aide to Lieutenant Moïse. There is no question of masters anymore.

MARS PLAISIR: Now, on behalf of my General, General L'Ouverture, this room must be ready in ten minutes. You know what the General is about time. Tell them where to put the things—Jacques and Jean. Or maybe, Marat, they now have new names, too?

ORLEANS: Yes, I have a new name. I am now the Duke of Orleans.

MARS PLAISIR: (*Good-humouredly*) Good. You are Duke.

ORLEANS: Duke of Orleans. Orleans.

MARS PLAISIR: Orleans. And you. . . Jacques?

MAX: My name is Robespierre. Maximillian Robespierre. Call me Max.

M. PLAISIR: Marat, Max, and Orleans. Ten Minutes. (*He exits.*)

ORLEANS: Where are we going to put these things, Marat?

MARAT: Anywhere outside. Put them in the outhouse. The people who used to sit on these are gone and that is the end of them. (*Max takes out the chair stage right.*)

ORLEANS: (*Sitting on the sofa*) This is too bad. This is a nice chair to sit on. (*He sits comfortably.*)

MARAT: Get up there and get on with it.

(*Max returns*)

ORLEANS: (*To Max*) Tell me something. How is the Revolution in France going?

MARAT: (*Intervening*) Just like ours. The white slaves in France heard that the black slaves in San Domingo had killed their masters and taken over the houses and the property. They heard that we did it and they follow us. I am sure in France, the slaves do not move pianos anymore. They make the old Counts and Dukes move them. (*Max has moved upstage of them to pick up the piano stool.*)

ORLEANS: I was talking to Max. What do you think, Max? Max knows a lot he is not saying. Max knows everything. (*Max has halted and turned.*)

MAX: I don't know everything. My Lieutenant, Moïse, knows a lot. I listen to what he says.

ORLEANS: Well, how is the revolution in France going? How does your Lieutenant Moïse see it? What the slaves got? We've got nothing yet.

MARAT: *(Intervening again with great speed)* Liberty-Equality-Fraternity.

ORLEANS: Everybody say Liberty-Equality-Fraternity. All right, Liberty is when you kill the master; Equality, he's dead and can't beat you again; and Fraternity – *(He pauses.)* What is that Fraternity? *(Max listens with foot on stool.)*

MARAT: Fraternity. That is very simple. Liberty-Equality. . . Fraternity!

ORLEANS: Yes, I know, but what is Fraternity?

MARAT: You are very stupid. Everybody knows what is Fraternity. Liberty, Equality, and then Fraternity. *(Max exits with stool in disgust.)*

ORLEANS: Yes, Marat, but what is it? Everybody talks about it but nobody says what it is.

MARAT: I just told you.

(Mars Plaisir returns.)

MARS PLAISIR: Well, you all seem to have done very much. The general will be here in two minutes. Hurry up please.

(Marat signals to Max and Orleans. Max exits with him, but Orleans remains.)

ORLEANS: M. Plaisir, tell me. Liberty-Equality-Fraternity. What it means, Fraternity?

(A pause.)

MARS PLAISIR: All right. Liberty, slavery abolished; Equality, no dukes, *(To Orleans)* pardon me, Orleans. No counts, no marquises, no princes, no lords, everybody equal. *(Marat and Max return with a plain table and chair.)* And Fraternity, everybody gets together and be friends, nobody taking advantage of anybody, everybody helping everybody else. *(Marat pounces on them.)*

Marat: That's exactly what I said. Liberty, Equality & fraternity, as Mars Plaisir has explained. ~~etc~~ P. 368.
Now get that piece of furniture out!

Mars Plaisir enters with the Spanish General who is attended by an aide, who seats them then exits.

Spanish Aide; This Toussaint are you sure he is to be trusted, their kind usually play false.

Spanish General; No! No! No! I don't agree, Toussaint L'Ouverture is one of the purest spirits that can be found in these Godforsaken islands. When Spain needed blacks to fight against the French Government we offered them guns ammunition and food. We recognised them as soldiers - as equals - and we asked them only to kill whites the French. All but Toussaint accepted readily and joined us. Toussaint alone joined us on his own terms. Let me tell you.

Enter Toussaint with Mars, Dessalines and Christophe.

Toussaint; Gentlemen be assured of my devotion to the throne, king and crown of Spain.

Spanish General; We have every proof of it.

Toussaint; We are Africans and Africans believe in a king. Our ruler is a King. To the King of Spain.

Dessalines, Christophe and slaves off. Begin La Marseillaise. Toussaint gets angry. Spanish General dismissed without ceremony.

Toussaint; Captain Dessalines go out and stop that song immediately. Do not sing or hum that song again, either in my presence or alone. We are Africans and Africans believe in a king. We are slaves and we believe in liberty and equality. But we are not republicans. Do not sing that song again. "La Marseillaise is the song of enemies. Our ruler is a king, the king of Spain.

Enter Lieutenant Moise, he waves a copy of the "Le Moniteur"

Moise; News citizens news.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 369.

MARAT: That's exactly what I said. Liberty, Equality and then Fraternity, as Mars Plaisir has explained. (To Orleans.) Now get that piece of furniture out!

(Toussaint enters with the Spanish General who is attended by an aide.)

TOUSSAINT: General, you can count upon us. I have to repeat: We are devoted to Spain and the King of Spain.

(At the same time near the exit, Orleans, who has been sitting on the one remaining piece of furniture, the sofa, springs to attention. When he sees that Toussaint has not noticed him, he calls Max and together they take the sofa out. Toussaint is in the uniform of a General. In Act I, Scene I, he was a very human person assuming by instinct an authority that the situation demanded. Now he is every inch a soldier in command. Dessalines is in the uniform of a captain. In the background are a few soldiers, bare-footed and somewhat ragged. The Spanish General is nodding in satisfaction at Toussaint's words. The General is about to leave and Toussaint salutes him. The General takes the salute, then embraces Toussaint, and leaves with his aide. Toussaint walks backward and forward, deep in thought. A humming of La Marseillaise begins upstage. Dessalines, Christophe and some soldiers enter humming. After a few seconds the humming is so clear and insistent that Toussaint has to take notice of it. He turns to them. The humming stops immediately onstage only. Dessalines stiffens. Toussaint looks at them for a second and when he speaks his tone is grave.)

TOUSSAINT: Captain Dessalines, go out and stop that song immediately. *(Dessalines goes rapidly. Offstage the humming stops. Dessalines returns.)* Do not sing or hum that song again, either in my presence or alone. We are Africans, and Africans believe in a King. We were slaves and we believe in liberty and equality. But we are not republicans. Do not sing that song again. La Marseillaise is the song of enemies. Our ruler is a king, the King of Spain.

(At this moment, a light appears in the small area on stage right while, simultaneously, the lights fade in the central area. The Spanish General is seen with his aide in the small room.)

SPANISH GENERAL: No, no, no, I don't agree. Toussaint L'Ouverture is one of the purest spirits that can be found in these Godforsaken islands. I am certain of his devotion to the throne and the Crown of Spain. He has given every proof of it. When Spain needed the blacks to fight against the French Government, we offered them guns, ammunition and food; we recognised London

them as soldiers—as equals—and we asked them only to kill whites—the French. All but Toussaint accepted readily and joined us. Toussaint alone joined us on his own terms. Let me tell you . . .

(The lights in the small room go off and once more the main area is illuminated. Toussaint stands as he was before opposite to Dessalines and the ragged soldiers. Into the middle of them rushes a young soldier, Lieutenant Moïse. He waves a copy of the periodical Le Moniteur over his head. He shouts to the soldiers.)

MOISE: News, citizens! News!

(Moïse has not seen Toussaint and his attention is drawn to him by the concentration on Toussaint of Dessalines and the other soldiers. Moïse therefore turns towards Toussaint. His enthusiasm is momentarily checked by Toussaint's glance.)

TOUSSAINT: Well, Lieutenant Moïse, what is this new title by which you are addressing us? Since when have we become citizens? Only members of the French Republic are citizens.

MOISE: General, we are citizens. I have news. General, let me tell you the news.

(Toussaint seems unwilling to make the concession, but Moïse is so enthusiastic and is appealing so strongly that Toussaint partly relents.)

TOUSSAINT: All right, Lieutenant Moïse, tell us this news of yours.

(One of two soldiers join the crowd behind Dessalines, and Moïse dramatically takes the centre of the stage. He waves the paper in his hands and speaks rhetorically.)

MOISE: We are citizens, sailors from the ship tell me. They give me a paper and it is here in the paper.

TOUSSAINT: What, Lieutenant, is in the paper?

MOISE: Former slaves from San Domingo, Bellay *(Looking up)*, black man, *(Reads again)* go to France, to the Chamber of Deputies to represent San Domingo. President of Chamber welcome him and give him Fraternal kiss. President of French Chamber give black slave from San Domingo fraternal kiss. French sailor tell me. And I read it in the paper here. In *Le Moniteur*, the official paper. Slavery in every colony, abolished!

(Moïse can speak no longer but continues to wave the paper. There has been a growing hum of excitement while Moïse was speaking. Toussaint has listened intently yet calmly.)

TOUSSAINT: Give me that paper.

(Moïse hands it to him and he reads it carefully.)

TOUSSAINT: Moïse, you are right. The Convention has abolished slavery. Dessalines.

(Toussaint pats Moïse on the shoulder and then talks quietly to him and Dessalines. Dessalines, summoning two slaves, goes off with Moïse. Moïse re-enters and whispers to Toussaint. Moïse stands nearby on his right. After a pause, Dessalines enters pushing in front of him, at sword-point, the Spanish General.)

SPANISH GENERAL: General Toussaint, I asked to be brought to you. This savage beast. . .

TOUSSAINT: Marquis, you are my prisoner.

SPANISH GENERAL: Your prisoner?

TOUSSAINT: Yes, a prisoner of the French Republic. I and all of us who you see here are now citizens of the French Republic, one and indivisible. It is here in *Le Moniteur*. The Chamber of Deputies in France has abolished slaves throughout the French Empire.

SPANISH GENERAL: But you are Africans and Africans believe in a King.

TOUSSAINT: We were slaves and slaves believe in freedom.

SPANISH GENERAL: But the San Domingo Government abolished slavery in San Domingo. And you refused to join them. As Africans you swore undying allegiance to a King, the King of Spain.

TOUSSAINT: Marquis, you suffer from the delusion that an African is a special breed of animal different from the rest of the human species. Different he is but only when he is brought across the Atlantic and dumped in the Antilles. Get a chair for the Marquis. He is not holding up very well.
(Christophe brings a chair for the Spanish General. He sits.) Marquis, my father was a chief in Africa. Before he was captured and brought here he owned slaves. He told me that some Africans—not all, but some—had

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known and accepted slavery for hundreds of years. But as soon as they came here and saw only black men from Africa were slaves and because they were black could be nothing else but slaves, one thought became dominant in their minds—freedom! I want you to understand it, Marquis. For unless you do, this island will be an island of blood and graves. Look at these people, General. Some of them understand only one French word—*Liberté*. (*Moïse is now gesturing to the crowd of men, who are eagerly listening.*) They will join anything, or leave anything, for *Liberté*. That is why I can lead them. But the day that they feel I am not for Liberty, the day they feel I am not telling them everything, I am finished. They are all listening to us now. As soon as you and I have finished speaking, they will know what we have said, because Moïse, my nephew, is translating what we say into Creole. Many discussions have taken place in front of these men while Moïse translated. They know that the Spanish San Domingo Government declared slavery abolished here, that they repeatedly sent to us asking us to join the Republic. But they also understand, Marquis, that when the Government in France abolished slavery, I would be joining them; not before. Now that slavery has been abolished, we go at once. Our soldiers are strategically placed in relation to yours; they have always been. Marquis, your sword please. (*The Spanish General, still dazed, hands over his sword mechanically. Toussaint accepts it with a graceful bow.*) Take him away. No, not you, Captain Dessalines. I have instructed Moïse what to do.

(*Moïse takes the Spanish flag and the Spanish General off. Toussaint exits followed by Dessalines and Christophe. One slave returns the chair to its place behind the table. Another follows Christophe to the exit to ensure that the officers are gone. He returns to the crowd of slaves who are excitedly conferring among themselves. Other ex-slaves converge from all sides to hear the news. A shout goes up, out of which comes a joyous "La Marseillaise."* Drummers enter to accompany the rocking anthem as the men begin to jump up ad lib. Offstage men start a chant that cuts through the repeat of "La Marseillaise." The chant eventually drowns out "La Marseillaise" completely as more sing the former and less the latter.

(*When all the men are chanting "Enfin les Français ont donné liberté", a priestess enters with a voodoo container which has three compartments—to hold small jars—and a central lighted candle. She kneels facing the audience in front of the drummers who are seated on a bench. Then three women dancers enter with a new chant, "La Liberté," in counterpoint to the men's chant. Each woman brings in a jar with which they appear to sprinkle the floor. They converge on the priestess and deposit their jars in her container. The drums and chanting stop suddenly. A new rhythm starts immediately. The three women whirl and jerk their bodies in time with it. The men*

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a simple movement in the background until the women spin off to stage left. Then five of them move downstage in an open-close movement which is stopped by an attendant houngan—voodoo priest—who enters from upstage and makes a diagonal cross with a bull's tail slashing the stage on either side of his path. The five are herded upstage right as the top rhythm changes to a simple insidious phrase.

(As banner-bearing slaves move across upstage, the chief Houngan with a cross stuck in the mouth of a gourd floats through a curve upstage right and down. He is preceded by the first attendant bowing before him with the bull's tail. He is followed by two attendant houngans carrying voodoo branched candle sticks with lighted candles in them. The first attendant stands, then kneels downstage right with a violent torso movement as the Chief Houngan stands behind him with the cross over his head.

(Two other things have happened while this is going on: Dessalines has returned down left with Mars Plaisir. Dessalines has pushed through the women dancers to stand with hands on hips looking on; a woman—to be known later as Celestine—has entered dancing behind the two candle-bearing attendants. She is followed by the Chief drummer who is executing the top rhythm. Celestine spins into the centre of the stage and there she sees Dessalines. She moves towards him, tempting him to follow her movements. The drummer moves towards them urging them on. Celestine joins forearms with Dessalines and he moves into the dance with her. They then hold hands and do three forehead-to-forehead turns. Breaking this off, both Celestine and Dessalines are dizzy enough to be more susceptible to possession. While Dessalines drifts laterally with his arms out at his sides straight from his shoulders across the stage behind her, Celestine begins trembling with violent jerks of her upper body. She falls to the ground, and begins to roll, still trembling at the knees and shoulders. She rolls up and down stage then stops and trembles violently in one spot as Dessalines drifts down towards her, makes a complete turn with his arms outstretched, raises his left foot, toes pointed downwards, and clenched right fist and shakes them over her body while showing the whites of his eyes. Mars Plaisir places a hand on the drum of the Chief Drummer. Simultaneously, the drums stop, the candles are snuffed out.)

BLACKOUT.

ACT 1 SCENE III — 1798

During the blackout, the bench of the previous scene is cleared. Then, as the lights return, two servants are seen, one bringing in two chairs, the other with

a chair and an American flag. The flag has thirteen stars in a circle on a blue ground. There are thirteen stripes, seven red and six white.

1ST SERVANT: You heard anything about the battle?

2ND SERVANT: What battle?

1ST SERVANT: Governor Toussaint and our army are fighting the mulattoes at Jacmel, and the British, they say, are trying to get the mulattoes to join them.

2ND SERVANT: I don't know. I don't care. I am a servant to the American Consul. At the end of the month he pays me my money. That is all I know and that is all I want to know.

1ST SERVANT: He says we are good servants, we work well, and that when he goes to America, he will take us.

2ND SERVANT: That's what he thinks. In America they have slaves. I'm a free man. I am not a slave anymore. I am not going to America or any place where they have slaves. That is all I know. I know nothing else.

(Mr. Tobias Lear, the American Consul of San Domingo, enters and looks around the room with approval.)

1ST SERVANT: Can we get anything for you, sir?

LEAR: No. Everything looks satisfactory.

1ST SERVANT: May I get you a drink, sir?

LEAR: No. I am expecting guests. When they arrive. . . *(Voices heard off.)*
Ah, if that is General Maitland or General Hédouville, show them in at once. Anybody else, send them away. *(Servants exit. 1st Servant re-enters and announces the visitor.)*

1ST SERVANT: General Hédouville.

LEAR: General, the Representative of the French Government is always welcome on American territory, even though it is in a French colony.

1ST SERVANT: General Maitland. *(He enters.)*

LEAR: General Maitland. I've long wanted to meet the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in San Domingo. I am happy, at last, to welcome you to the American Consulate. *(He is obviously nervous.)* Gentlemen, or perhaps I should say, Generals, I know that Britain and France, your respective countries, are at war. But nevertheless you are both on neutral territory and the three of us have to consult with one another about this fantastic Negro, this Toussaint L'Ouverture—now, God help us, Governor of the Colony. *(He sits centre.)*

MAITLAND: *(To Hédouville)* General, was it necessary for the French Government to appoint him not only Commander-in-Chief of the French Army in San Domingo, but Governor of the Colony? We of the British Services could not possibly think of such a thing. *(He sits.)*

HEDOUVILLE: I know what you mean, and some of us did think that the appointment of a black as Governor was a mistake. But here was the problem: the mulattoes, being half white, educated and privileged, have always felt themselves superior to the blacks. The blacks, being slaves, have always envied the mulattoes. They have never trusted each other. But both the mulattoes and the blacks trust Toussaint. And since the white representatives from San Domingo also urged that Toussaint was loyal to France—we had no choice! With the support of the whites, the mulattoes and the blacks, Toussaint could control the Colony—for France. However, Toussaint has now become too powerful. I've been sent here by the French Government to restrain him. If we could only strengthen the mulattoes, we could maintain a balance. *(He sits.)*

MAITLAND: Today, that problem is being solved for us. General L'Ouverture I understand, now faces a disastrous military defeat. The mulattoes from all over the island are pouring into Jacmel. He will never take that mulatto stronghold and he will have to retire in disorder. The mulatto Commander at Jacmel, General Pétion, is a mortal enemy of General L'Ouverture, and, if he can, he will not only defeat Toussaint, but destroy his entire army.

HEDOUVILLE: Gentlemen, since General L'Ouverture is Governor appointed by the French Government, my position is anomalous. I have the authority of a representative of the French Government but no actual power at my disposal. I am in the best position to recognise the threat to the present order which General L'Ouverture represents. I also am informed that he faces defeat at Jacmel. . .

(At this moment, a trumpet sounds. The three jump to their feet obviously startled.)

LEAR: But that is impossible. . .

HEDOUVILLE: That is Toussaint's trumpet. *(He rushes to a window and looks outside. He comes back and grabs his hat.)* Yes, it is he. Excuse me, gentlemen.

(He makes unceremoniously for the exit on the other side of the room. There is a heavy knock on the door. Enter Christophe, Dessalines and Moïse, booted and spurred. They have obviously been riding hard. Moïse is applying a handkerchief somewhat carefully to his right eye. Dessalines sits resolutely in the centre chair, puts his foot in the other chair, draws a knife from his boot and begins to peel an orange.)

MAITLAND: Generals, we thought that the Governor had come. It was his trumpet that we heard. What is the news from Jacmel?

DESSALINES: *(Peeling orange)* It was his trumpet. But whenever he comes to Port-au-Prince he always goes to see old Pierre Baptiste. *(Slices top off the orange.)*

MAITLAND: General Baptiste has rendered, I suppose, a great service to the State?

DESSALINES: He is no general. He is over one hundred years old. *(Sucks orange.)*

MAITLAND: The Governor shows great respect for people of advanced age.

DESSALINES: No question of respect. Old Pierre Baptiste is as strong as you or me. Toussaint goes to see him because when they were slaves together and Toussaint was a boy, old Baptiste gave him lessons, taught him to read and write, taught him some Latin out of a book written by a great soldier.

MOISE: *(To Dessalines)* His name was Caesar. The book was "Caesar on the War in France".

DESSALINES: I don't know what book it was. Old Pierre Baptiste used to work for some priests. He knew some Latin and he used to teach Toussaint. Now that Toussaint is Governor, and even before, he never comes into Port-au-Prince without first going to see old Pierre. When he has made up his mind to do something he always does it. *(Takes last suck on the orange.)* nothing stands in his way. *(Throws orange over his shoulder; it narrowly misses Lear.)*

MAITLAND: Most admirable. Obviously the Governor is a man born to govern. But the news. . . (*Moïse meanwhile has been wiping his eye more insistently than before. Maitland notices, turns to him.*) General, you are wounded.

MOISE: I believe I have lost an eye in the service of liberty. Many have lost more for less. Gentlemen, Jacmel has been taken, the army of mulattoes under General Pétion has been completely destroyed. That, I may venture to say, creates an entirely new situation in the country—for us all, I don't know exactly what the Governor has in mind.

CHRISTOPHE: Nobody ever knows.

MOISE: But I believe that when he heard that there was a sort of conference here, he decided to come at once although he would not break his rule of going to see old Pierre.

MAITLAND: Quite, quite. Generals, you are high in the service of the Governor. In fact, of the State of French San Domingo. This victory of yours at Jacmel is not unexpected. Just before you came I was telling Mr. Lear that General L'Ouverture fights no battles which he does not win. He besieges no town which he does not capture. You remember, Mr. Lear, we were talking about that when we heard the trumpet. As a matter of fact, it is in anticipation of just such a result that I came here to talk to the American Consul. Isn't that so, Mr. Consul?

LEAR: Yes, yes.

MAITLAND: And I think that I should tell you gentlemen at once, what we have tentatively arrived at. It is obvious that the Governor and his army are now masters of San Domingo. I am able to inform you that His Majesty King George of England has followed through his Ministers the rise of the slaves of San Domingo. His Majesty has long been of the opinion that if the blacks of San Domingo were to achieve complete mastery of the island, then he would welcome the consolidation of black power in a black state. Governor L'Ouverture can establish himself as King. (*Dessalines takes his foot off the chair.*) He would have around him his army, members of the government. . . he could create an aristocracy, and a nobility. . . and so on and so on. We in England have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that such stability can only be established by a monarchy, a king and royal family and a nobility. His Majesty, King George the Third of England would welcome as his brother, His Majesty King Toussaint L'Ouverture the First of San Domingo. That, Generals, is essentially what I have to tell you — what

Mr. Lear and I were discussing. I think America will throw its weight in support of this policy.

LEAR: Yes, we have to. The British have military forces and a fleet in this neighbourhood. We have none and we go with them.

DESSALINES: It seems to me. . .

MOISE: I believe, General Maitland, that such a proposition demands that it be considered first by the Governor. In addition, until he comes, we think that we would like to be alone to consider what will completely alter political relations inside and outside of San Domingo. Perhaps you can let us retire to a room.

MAITLAND: A most reasonable request, but there is no need. It would seem to me that Mr. Lear and I should retire and leave you to yourselves, and when the Governor comes, we could return. Mr. Lear, do I express your sentiments?

LEAR: I, I agree.

MAITLAND: Well, Generals, we leave you to your discussion.

(Maitland, followed by Lear, leaves the room.)

CHRISTOPHE: Moïse, what do you think?

MOISE: Why do you ask me? You both are Generals of Division, I am only General of Brigade. You are my senior officers.

DESSALINES: Senior officers! Only on the battlefield. In things like this you always know everything.

MOISE: Only the Governor can decide.

DESSALINES: He will decide but I know what I would do. I don't know the English King, but I know the slaves. We are African people. We like a king. We would like to know that the island belongs to us. Toussaint will be as good a king as anybody. I think we ought to take it.

MOISE: Take what?

CHRISTOPHE: Dessalines means what the Englishman is offering us. To establish San Domingo as an independent island free of France, with its own king and its own government.

MOISE: So you mean the British General can give us that?

DESSALINES: Not the British General, he says. The British King.

MOISE: Christophe?

CHRISTOPHE: I don't know. I think there are strong arguments for and strong arguments against.

MOISE: You are waiting to hear what Toussaint says.

CHRISTOPHE: That is the kind of nasty remark you are always making.

MOISE: I am going to tell Toussaint this: We have escaped from the French King. Do we now give ourselves over to the English King?

CHRISTOPHE: He makes an offer. We accept it or we don't. Independence. The Government ours, the army ours, our own king. . .

MOISE: Yes, and our own aristocracy. A San Domingo nobility. In my district there is the town of Marmalade and there is another town of Turkey. It is a pity that Marmalade and Turkey are not in your provinces. You, Dessalines, could be Duke of Turkey--you make enough noise. And you, Christophe, could be Count of Marmalade. All sugar and spice.

DESSALINES: *(Springing at Moïse)* Duke of Turkey! Look here . . . If you weren't wounded, I would put my hands on you. *(Toussaint appears upstage.)* I am no Duke of Marmalade.

MOISE: Not Marmalade, Turkey. Christophe will be. . . *(They both turn on him.)*

TOUSSAINT: Generals, the Commander-in-Chief is here.

(The three Generals freeze.)

CHRISTOPHE: Ah, Ah, General we have a problem.

TOUSSAINT: *(Drily, as he comes forward)* So I see.

(Christophe clears his throat.)

CHRISTOPHE: Governor L'Ouverture, we met here Consul Tobias Lear talking with General Maitland.

TOUSSAINT: I know. Wasn't Hédouville here?

CHRISTOPHE: No sir. General Hédouville was not here when we came. But when General Maitland heard that the army of Pétion has been defeated. . .

DESSALINES: Destroyed.

CHRISTOPHE: When he heard that Pétion's army had been destroyed, he said that we could become independent. The British Government would support a black state. We would have a King and he suggested that you, Governor, should be the first king.

DESSALINES: The King of England would welcome you, Toussaint, as his brother.

MOISE: And don't forget—a black aristocracy, a black nobility, the Duke of Turkey and the Count of Marmalade.

(Dessalines turns away angrily.)

CHRISTOPHE: Governor. General Maitland and the American Consul are in the next room waiting for your reply.

(There is a long silence.)

TOUSSAINT: An offer of independence. To break with France. This is not the first offer, nor will it be the last. In all my military negotiations with General Maitland, he kept on hinting this to me.

DESSALINES: Toussaint, you going to take it? *(A pause. Toussaint does not answer.)* Take it Toussaint. Make yourself king. If you make yourself king, San Domingo will be ours and French, British, nobody will be able to take it from us.

TOUSSAINT: General Christophe, what is your opinion of this offer? For it is only an offer. Everything depends on what we say.

CHRISTOPHE: Well, I think that the offer is very valuable. On the other hand, to take it means that we run certain dangers. I . . . I . . .

MOISE: Christophe, how can you be on both sides at the same time. The Governor has asked you your opinion.

DESSALINES: And what is yours, General Moïse? *(To Toussaint.)* He is against.

(Toussaint looks enquiringly at Moïse.)

MOISE: The Duke of Turkey has everything mixed up. He doesn't know what I am against. He doesn't know what I am for. Governor, I am against taking anything from the British, either from their general or from their king. They don't own us. They can give us nothing. That is what I am against. But that we should declare ourselves free from the French; that we should make San Domingo a free and independent country; that I am for. Now, whether you should become a king with your Dukes and Counts, or President of the independent Republic of San Domingo, I am not very sure in my own mind. We will have to ask the people. But if we all four of us and the rest, tell the people that we want to finish with the French, and we want to be free and equal; make San Domingo independent, the people will come with us. The army will be entirely on our side and the French will never be able to take their colony back. But we don't take anything from the British. We don't become independent because the British will help us. We do it because the country belongs to us. We have made it what it is, and we alone can make it what it can be. Nobody else can. That is what I feel. . .

(A silence.)

DESSALINES: Toussaint?

TOUSSAINT: Moïse, let the gentlemen know I am ready.

(Moïse exits and returns immediately with General Maitland and Tobias Lear.)

MAITLAND: Governor Toussaint, we are at your service.

TOUSSAINT: General Maitland, and Mr. Lear, I feel deeply honoured by this generous offer which countries like Britain and the United States have made to us, we who yesterday were slaves. I would like you to express to His Majesty of England through his Ministers, that his offer of alliance

and recognition with a possible King of San Domingo is something that we of San Domingo will never forget. But it will be no surprise to you or to any member of my government that my position today is what it always has been. It is the French Government, the French revolutionary government, which has freed the slaves of San Domingo. No other country in the world has done that or promises to do that. A French colony we are and a French Colony we will remain, unless France attempts to restore slavery. That is the faith by which I live and under that banner I hope to die. That is the message which the people transmit to your government—through me, the Governor of San Domingo, their representative. Gentlemen, I expect we shall again be in contact to discuss the many points which are at issue between us.

(He bows and leaves, followed by his Generals. The lights go off in the big room and after a period they are turned on in the small room to the right and the small room to the left. Maitland is dictating to a secretary under a Union Jack and Toussaint is dictating to Mars Plaisir. They are both saying exactly the same thing and are making the pauses for the secretaries to write.)

MAITLAND: The British offer. . .

TOUSSAINT: The British offer is designed to create a split between French San Domingo and the French Government.

MAITLAND: . . . is designed to create a split between French San Domingo and the French Government.

TOUSSAINT: However, it must be noted that . . .

MAITLAND: However, it must be noted that this does not mean any support from the British for a free San Domingo.

TOUSSAINT: . . . this does not means any support from the British for a free San Domingo. That would ruin the whole British Colonial system in the Caribbean.

MAITLAND: That would ruin the whole British Colonial system in the Caribbean. A San Domingo at war with France. . .

TOUSSAINT: A San Domingo at war with France they will support only until the peace. Whereupon . . .

MAITLAND: Whereupon the British will either blockade the island and our selves take it over. . .

TOUSSAINT: . . . or they will collaborate with the French towards restoring the old colonial condition. . .

MAITLAND: . . . mulatto discrimination. . .

TOUSSAINT: . . . and negro slavery.

(The secretaries write, Toussaint and General Maitland watching them. When the writing is finished.)

TOUSSAINT: Send this dispatch to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of France.

MAITLAND: Send this dispatch to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

TOGETHER: Top secret.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II SCENE I : 1800

A screen to the side of a bed in a small room where Marie-Jeanne lives. There is a table with a bottle of wine and glasses, as well as a small bookcase. Marie-Jeanne is in a dressing gown. General Hédouville is putting on his coat. He pulls the coat down and adjusts the sleeves. Marie-Jeanne helps to button the front. Then she sits on the bed.

MARIE-JEANNE: I suppose you are going now.

HEDOUVILLE: *(After a pause)* Why do you think so? Even if I had to go, I would like to stay awhile, to talk to you.

MARIE-JEANNE: Why should you want to talk to me?

(Hédouville sits and takes her hand.)

HEDOUVILLE: Because you make me feel more at home in this wild colony than I have since I left Paris.

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Taking her hand away)* Me! Me make you feel at home? I am a mulatto woman. I am nobody. I was a slave. I was the woman of a French planter, Governor Toussaint was a slave on the same estate. He helps

me in any way that he can.

HEDOUVILLE: You have many books here and you teach young children to read. You were a slave. How were you educated?

MARIE-JEANNE: I was the woman of a plantation owner. His wife liked me.

HEDOUVILLE: *(Standing and chuckling)* His wife liked you?

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Standing)* Yes, there were many of us mulatto women in that situation, accepted in the house, one of the house-slaves, but spying on the slaves. His wife liked me, taught me to read, and I used to read the books in the house. She even taught me some music. When the revolution came to the plantation, and she had to go, I took some of the books. *(Walks over to the bookcase.)* I have them here. I read them all the time. I have nothing else to do, and I teach the children of the officials to read. Many of the Generals themselves can't even read, far less write.

(Hédouville gets up and walks over to the bookcase. There are some books on the top. He bends over them and, half to himself, speaks.)

HEDOUVILLE: Molière, Bossuet, Corneille, Racine! *(He flips the pages then turns to look at her.)* You know, I wish we had met under different circumstances.

MARIE-JEANNE: You mean you wish I was a white woman.

(Hédouville puts the Racine down on the chair, puts a knee on it, takes Marie-Jeanne's hand and speaks very earnestly.)

HEDOUVILLE: No, I don't mean that at all. I wish I had met you in Paris. Things would have been different if I had met you in Paris.

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Taking her hand away again)* You wouldn't have met me in Paris. I would have been a slave. My mistress promised to take me to Paris one day, but I was a slave.

HEDOUVILLE: No! No! No! The moment a slave landed in France he was free. The revolution did not create this. That was French law long before the revolution.

MARIE-JEANNE: General Hédouville, you are saying some wonderful things to me. If you are not in a hurry, as you don't seem to be, perhaps you can tell me some of the things I want to know and which only a man who has lived in Paris can tell me. Can I pour you a drink?

(Marie-Jeanne, without waiting for an answer, moves over to the table and pours wine into two glasses. She returns, handing one to Hédouville.)

HEDOUVILLE: *(Raising his glass)* To my most charming hostess. *(Marie-Jeanne bows gracefully and they drink. Hédouville drains his glass, Marie-Jeanne only sips hers, but pours another glass for him, half of which he drinks at once as she replaces the bottle and returns.)* And now, my dear?

MARIE-JEANNE: I am not educated, *mon Général*, I wish to know what a man like you thinks about San Domingo and our new society with slaves now free. And particularly what you think of us, the mulattoes. What will happen to us, now that the mulatto army of the South is defeated? *(She takes a sip of wine from her glass.)*

HEDOUVILLE: My dear, I occupy a very responsible position in this government, and I shouldn't speak about such things. *(He sips from his glass.)* But, surely you are the kind of person I can talk to. I believe that the mulattoes are in great danger. *(He walks downstage.)*

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Following him)* From the blacks. I knew that. The thing, General Hédouville, is this. We need help. What can we do?

HEDOUVILLE: I can't suggest anything. *(Moving away from her.)* This is a matter from which I must keep very far.

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Following again)* But all of us believe that you came here to assist the mulattoes to take power, so as to prevent Governor L'Ouverture and the ex-slaves from taking over the colony. But our mulatto army is in retreat. Where does your government stand now?

HEDOUVILLE: My dear, you seem to understand a great deal. You understand much more than I gave you credit for. I cannot speak for my Government, but this much I can say. The blacks now have the power, but I believe they are too ignorant and too uncivilised to keep it. At the proper moment the French Government, I believe, I cannot see it doing otherwise, would throw all its weight behind the mulattoes.

MARIE-JEANNE: If this were to come to General Pétion's ears, somehow

HEDOUVILLE: Ah, that I cannot do. But I believe some friend of both the mulattoes and the French Government, could arrange a meeting with General Pétion. I am sure we could come to some understanding. But someone else would have to arrange that, not me. As a matter of fact, this conversation has gone far enough.

(He straightens up and moves over to the table to put down his glass. He takes up his hat. As he is doing this Marie-Jeanne speaks without looking at him.)

MARIE-JEANNE: We have one problem, General, *(She turns to him.)* and that is Toussaint L'Ouverture.

HEDOUVILLE: Toussaint L'Ouverture. Until he is removed there is no freedom for anybody else in San Domingo. Until he is removed we are all his prisoners. My dear Marie-Jeanne, I must leave you now. *(She nods with understanding of what she has to do to facilitate his leaving. She goes to the back entrance, putting down her glass on the way. She disappears briefly and returns with a nod of clearance. Hédouville bows over Marie-Jeanne's hand. I hope to see you soon again, (He kisses her hand.) and not too much politics.*

(As soon as he leaves, Marie-Jeanne, without haste but with decision, sits at the small table and begins to write. While she writes she hums to herself snatches from "Vendetta ti chieggio." She finishes the letter, and calls: Celestine. As if in answer, there is a violent commotion at the door. She is taken by surprise. She rises, and goes to the entrance, tying her gown about her. Dessalines strides in wearing full uniform including hat and sword. He is pushing the maid, Celestine, ahead of him. Celestine cries: Madame.)

DESSALINES: *(to Celestine)* Get out of here. *(Celestine flies out of the room. Dessalines turns to Marie-Jeanne.)* I heard that Frenchman was here.

MARIE-JEANNE: Are you paying me a visit, General Dessalines?

DESSALINES: Was that Frenchman here?

MARIE-JEANNE: If you came here to see him, it is clear he is not here.

DESSALINES: I came to see you. You know that.

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Recovering her composure)* Give me your hat, General. *Dessalines gingerly hands over his hat.)* And your sword. *(Dessalines hands over his sword.)* Sit down, General. *(Dessalines, subdued, sits in the chair.)*

that Marie-Jeanne indicates. As he sits on the Racine volume, he jumps slightly, takes it and sets it on the floor. Marie-Jeanne has brought her chair from behind the table and they both sit some distance from each other.)
Well, General, I am delighted that you find time to pay me another visit so soon.

DESSALINES: Marie-Jeanne, this Frenchman, this white man, you are always seeing him?

MARIE-JEANNE: He comes to see me. You come too.

DESSALINES: But you know what he comes for.

MARIE-JEANNE: What do you come for?

DESSALINES: Marie, I tell you again, for him you are just another mulatto woman. I want you to marry me. In the church. I am General of Division now, Marie. Fort-au-Prince is my headquarters. I am building a palace there. It will be finished in two months. If you will marry me I will put three hundred men on it and finish in a month. I am Governor of the Province. You will be the wife of the Governor.

MARIE-JEANNE: General Dessalines, I do not want to be the wife of the Governor of a Province.

DESSALINES: *(Standing)* You prefer to be the woman of this Frenchman.

MARIE-JEANNE: I prefer to be what I want to be. You don't own me, General Dessalines. Nobody owns me. Slavery is finished.

DESSALINES: *(Towering over her)* Marie, are you the woman of this man? You were the woman of M. Bullet. You were the woman of the Spanish Marquis. Now you are the woman of General Hédouville. You are the woman of everybody.

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Slipping out from her seat)* Except the woman of General Dessalines.

DESSALINES: *(Following)* What must I do? I don't look at any other woman. I can't. Whenever I want a woman, I think of you. Always. All these women are ready to sleep with General Dessalines and you are ready to sleep with everybody except General Dessalines. Marie, I know I am a savage but I will be everything you want me to be. You only have to tell me. This man, this

French man, he is our enemy. If he gets the chance he and those like him will destroy us.

MARIE-JEANNE: I know that.

DESSALINES: You know that?

MARIE-JEANNE: Yes, I do.

DESSALINES: And yet he comes here to see you all the time.

(Marie-Jeanne goes to the table and picks up the letter she has just written. She rips the envelope open.)

MARIE-JEANNE: This letter is the proof of what I think of General Hédouville. And not only what I think, but what I now know.

DESSALINES: What is the use of showing me a letter. You know I can't read.

MARIE-JEANNE: Yes, I know. *(She calls.)* Celestine! *(Her maid appears cautiously.)* Celestine, I want you to do something for me. Here is a letter. You must read it aloud for General Dessalines. As you know, this is the General. He doesn't know how. . . *(Dessalines glowers a warning.)* . . . he doesn't know how well you can read, Celestine. Show him how quickly you have learnt. *(Marie-Jeanne hands the letter to Celestine. Celestine embarrassed, does not know what to do.)* Read it, child; you know you can.

DESSALINES: Do as you are told, girl.

(Celestine shrinks back. Marie-Jeanne with only one withering glance at Dessalines puts her arm around Celestine and reassures her.)

MARIE-JEANNE: Come, my child, you read for me every day. Read the letter. Begin: "Governor L'Ouverture . . ."

CELESTINE: *(Reading)* Governor L'Ouverture: Your Excellency. This is to inform you that I am now in a position to show the treachery of General Hédouville. Hédouville is ready to intrigue and plot with Pétion and the mulattoes. We can catch him red-handed. I. . .

DESSALINES: That's enough. Go away, you.

(Celestine hands over the letter and picks up her skirt for a rapid exit.)

MARIE-JEANNE: Wait. *(Celestine stops. Marie-Jeanne reseals the envelope.)* Here, Celestine, take this to Mars Plaisir. He is waiting to carry it to Governor Toussaint. Hurry!

(Celestine takes the letter from Marie-Jeanne and, obviously very relieved, rushes out of the room.)

DESSALINES: Marie, what can I say? I understand now what I didn't understand before. We will speak again. I have been trying to learn to read but I can't learn. I have to go but . . . Marie, do something for me.

MARIE-JEANNE: What is it?

DESSALINES: I want you to read . . . you remember. The book you read that night at the reception Toussaint gave. I can't forget it. Read it for me and then I will go.

MARIE-JEANNE: You want me to read for you?

DESSALINES: Yes, that is all I want.

(Marie-Jeanne goes over to him and bends low. He is taken aback. But she is merely picking up the Racine volume from the floor. She stands ready to read.)

MARIE-JEANNE: Marie-Jeanne will read for you. . . Jean-Jacques.

(The lights fade.)

ACT II SCENE II – 1800

Toussaint is sitting at a small table. Colonel Vincent, a French Officer, is standing.

TOUSSAINT: Vincent, I have some news for you. I have given General Hédouville notice of dismissal. He must leave by the next boat.

VINCENT: But, sire, he is the representative of the French Government. You cannot dismiss him in that way. The French Government has to recall him.

TOUSSAINT: No. He goes, and he goes at once. He has caused nothing here but disorder, intrigue, disruption of the government and rebellious sentiment in the population. Hédouville has to go. I have placed him under house arrest. (*Vincent is stupefied.*) Sit down, Vincent. Now you have come to talk about the constitution, and if you believe that I sent you away to Spanish San Domingo in order to publish the constitution when you were not here, you are quite right. I did not want you around. You think the constitution is despotic? Constitutions are what they turn out to be.

VINCENT: Sire, whatever the constitution is, what matters is that you have not consulted the First Consul of France. You have had it promulgated officially, you have had it printed and distributed. Which means that for you the matter is settled.

TOUSSAINT: Yes, for me the matter is settled. The constitution swears allegiance to France. For the rest, we govern ourselves.

VINCENT: Yes, General, the constitution swears allegiance to France, but it leaves no room for any French official.

TOUSSAINT: I want a Frenchman to come out and help me govern. But he must recognise the local government. Only a local government can govern. We don't want another Hédouville; we've had enough of them.

VINCENT: But that is independence.

TOUSSAINT: No. That is not independence. We do not seek independence. We are not ready for it. France will be elder brother, guide and mentor. The French Government will send commissioners to speak with me.

VINCENT: (*Standing involuntarily*) But, Sire, I have to remind you that General Bonaparte is not the man to whom one submits a *fait accompli*. Remember, he is First Consul of France.

TOUSSAINT: General Bonaparte is the first man in France and General L'Ouverture is the first man in San Domingo. (*Vincent sits.*)

VINCENT: Sire, you are establishing what amounts to a new dominion.

TOUSSAINT: No, Vincent. What we want is protection. We want to be protected by France. We want to learn from France. France will send capital and administrators to help us develop and educate the country.

VINCENT: What will be the position of the French Government?

TOUSSAINT: The French Government will send commissioners to speak with me.

VINCENT: But the French Government sent Hédouville.

TOUSSAINT: Hédouville came here to govern. No Frenchman can come here to govern. The French Government will send commissioners to speak with me.

VINCENT: This is something entirely new. America has become independent but America is a big country and. . .

TOUSSAINT: You mean that Americans were free men and not slaves. They were white and not black.

VINCENT: General, I did not mean that.

TOUSSAINT: You mean you did not say it.

VINCENT: General, I am speaking in the best interests of you and the ex-slaves of San Domingo. Tell me which of your comrades deserves promotion and rewards for services to the State; I will recommend them. I have very good contacts in France and if, General, you should feel that there has not been sufficient recognition of the services you have rendered, it will. . .

TOUSSAINT: Vincent, you are the best of the white men who have come here from France. But you are a white man, Vincent. You have never been a slave. You have never felt the degradation of being a black slave. This is not a matter of personal rewards for services rendered. I am a General, I am Commander-in-Chief and Governor of San Domingo, but if I make any serious mistakes all that can go—tomorrow. I will be a hunted fugitive and it will be because I am black and an ex-slave.

VINCENT: But General. . .

TOUSSAINT: Don't interrupt me, Vincent. In San Domingo we are an outpost of freed slaves. All around us in the Caribbean black men are slaves. Even in the independent United States, black men are slaves. In South America black men are slaves. Now I have sent millions of francs to the United States. You have heard about this. (*Vincent nods reluctantly.*) But it is not to build a fortune for myself so that if anything goes wrong I

can escape and live like a rich man. No, Vincent. If this Constitution functions satisfactorily, I intend to take one thousand soldiers, go to Africa and free hundreds of thousands in the black slave trade there and bring them here, to be free and French.

VINCENT: General, I have never doubted your devotion to the cause you represent. What I am telling you is that whatever you are doing, and intend to do, you must get the approval of General Bonaparte.

TOUSSAINT: No, Vincent, I have already done what I intended to do. I have sent a copy of the Constitution to General Bonaparte. (*Vincent is shocked.*) And now, Colonel Vincent (*Toussaint used the word "Colonel" and speaks in such a manner that Vincent rises and stands to attention.*) I hereby relieve you of your post as representative of the French Army in the army of San Domingo. I instruct you to go to France. You have a copy of the Constitution with you. (*Vincent places a hand at his breast pocket.*) You are to recommend it personally to the First Consul.

VINCENT: Sire, it may not be too late. Perhaps if I could go to General Bonaparte and tell him that you have withdrawn the Constitution, and are requesting his approval. Will you withdraw it?

TOUSSAINT: San Domingo may as well withdraw itself from these waters and attach itself to France. You have your orders, Colonel Vincent. I can leave the fate of the Constitution in no better hands than yours. Your long and faithful service to us has now reached its climax. You will be under house arrest until you leave. (*Vincent salutes and turns to leave. He stops and turns back.*)

VINCENT: Sire, before I go, allow me to say one more word about General Bonaparte . . .

TOUSSAINT: Colonel Vincent, the interview is now over.

(*The light fades on the area on stage right and comes up in the area on stage left. Vincent crosses the stage to the latter area during the cross-fade to the first ten notes of "La Marseillaise" as played on a flute.*)

ACT II SCENE III – 1800

The area on stage left represents the First Consul's office in The Tuileries, Paris. General Bonaparte is reading papers with his secretary and an orderly in attendance. There is a guard standing with a bayoneted musket in Colonel

Vincent's way. Vincent goes up to the guard and stops.

BONAPARTE: This is the most outrageous document that has ever come into my hands. We shall put these impertinent blacks in their place. *(To the guard.)* Let Colonel Vincent come in. *(The guard stands aside to admit Colonel Vincent.)* Colonel Vincent. You, a French Officer, have the audacity to recommend this document for my personal consideration.

VINCENT: Sire, my commanding officer instructed me. . .

BONAPARTE: Commanding officer? Those blacks with epaulettes on their shoulders? They are soldiers of a carnival.

VINCENT: Consul, you are misinformed. . .

BONAPARTE: Here in Paris, I am better informed than you, Vincent, who have been living there for years. Your intelligence has been corrupted by the poisonous atmosphere of that Caribbean island. Your brain needs washing. Do you know that there is a colonist who has offered to capture Toussaint L'Ouverture with sixty grenadiers?

VINCENT: He is bolder than I, for I would not attempt it with sixty thousand.

BONAPARTE: Listen, Mr. Secretary, to this Colonel of the French Army. Make notes of this. Colonel Vincent, all the blacks, when they see a real army, they will lay down their arms. They will be only too happy that we pardon them.

VINCENT: You are misinformed, Consul.

BONAPARTE: Vincent, *you* inform me. Mr. Secretary, take careful note of what he says.

VINCENT: Sire, the army has soldiers and officers tried and experienced by ten years of constant fighting.

BONAPARTE: "Constant fighting". Take note, Mr. Secretary. Constant fighting of ex-slaves against ex-slaves. Slaves in uniform, that's all that they are. Vincent, you are wrong about the strength of that army of blacks. I should have thought that an officer trained in my campaigns would know what an army was. Perhaps you know more about the finances of the colony. I understand Toussaint has salted away forty million francs.

VINCENT: Sire, he has not got forty million francs.

BONAPARTE: Vincent, this Constitution puts him in personal charge not only of the Government and the Army, but of the taxation, finances and trade of the Colony.

VINCENT: Sire, that was to keep his own hand upon the administration and the technical organisation of the country's economy.

BONAPARTE: Note that, Mr. Secretary. This ex-slave must handle everything himself. Tell me more about this omnipotent nigger, Colonel Vincent.

VINCENT: Sire, I shall do so. At the head of the resources of what is once more becoming a prosperous colony is the most active and tireless man one can imagine. It is the strictest truth to say that he is everywhere and, above all, in that spot where a sound judgment makes it essential for him to be.

BONAPARTE: He is even more active than I am. Mr. Secretary, write that this man works twenty hours a day.

VINCENT: Twenty-two hours a day, Sire. He sleeps only two hours every night.

BONAPARTE: Note, Mr. Secretary, two hours every night. We have obviously never had such a miracle in France. Continue, Colonel Vincent.

VINCENT: Sire, the faculty is accorded to him alone of never taking a rest. He enjoys the advantage of being able to start at once with the work in his office after wearisome journeys, to reply to a hundred letters a day, and to tire out his secretaries.

BONAPARTE: Marvellous, Colonel Vincent, marvellous. Tell me. What authority does he have over the men around him? He has obviously completely subordinated Frenchman.

VINCENT: Sire, he has the art of tantalising and confusing everybody even to deceit: all this makes of him a man so superior to all around him that respect and submission reach the limits of fanaticism in a vast number of heads.

BONAPARTE: *(To secretary)* Have you got that? "Fanaticism in a vast number of heads", the heads of ex-slaves not excluding the heads of officers of the French Army. Go on, Colonel Vincent.

VINCENT. Sire, at your request, I do as you ask. He has imposed on his brothers in San Domingo a power without bounds. He is absolute master of the island and nothing can counteract his wishes, whatever they may be.

BONAPARTE: Excellent. You have told me all I want to know. And now it seems all that is required of me is that I agree with him about the Constitution which he has already made public and thus accept that the colony will become independent.

VINCENT: Sire, he does not aim at independence. He told me repeatedly that he wants the French Government to send commissioners to speak with him.

BONAPARTE: I suspect that the only commissioner he really will accept is myself, and I am occupied with other matters at the present time. You may go, Colonel Vincent.

VINCENT: Sire, I am asking you to accept the Constitution. I know it is very difficult, but consider the spirit in which it has been made. Toussaint L'Ouverture only wants to secure the future of his people in a constitutional way. Your acceptance of the Constitution would assure him of your friendship and would mean stronger ties between France and the richest colony in the world. General Bonaparte cannot lose prestige in a French colony four thousand miles away. As a matter of fact, Sire, your status would be very much the greater if you supported local opinion and local personalities.

BONAPARTE: Colonel Vincent, I do not wish you to concern yourself any longer over my status with island blacks. You are under arrest. Vincent, go. *(Vincent is led off by the guard. Bonaparte stands and begins to walk up and down.)* Mr. Secretary, dispatch these instructions at once. Double the force that has been arranged to go to San Domingo. By double I mean that ten thousand becomes twenty thousand, not ten thousand and as many as possible. Also, I want to make some changes in the command. The Chief of Staff must be Dugua. When I left Egypt for Palestine, he remained and handled a difficult situation efficiently. We will need General Boyer who will be very useful in a tropical territory. And General Humbert. He was in command of the expedition against Ireland. These are men skilled in colonial warfare. Also I want a full list of officers who have taken part in guerrilla warfare in La Vendee. I want to speak to these men all at the same time. Ah, yes. Draft a letter to General Berthier making him personally responsible for the expedition. And, Mr. Secretary, inform my brother-in-law General Leclerc, that I want to see him—and my sister, his wife—immediately.

Arrange for them to come to dinner. My sister, and the husband of my sister, will give the expedition the prestige that it needs.

(There is a knock. The Secretary goes to attend. He returns.)

SECRETARY: Sire, the orderly wishes to know what should be done with Colonel Vincent.

BONAPARTE: Yes, what shall we do with Vincent? He is a good officer. After a period of re-education in Europe, he can again be of great service. I will send him into exile for a period.

SECRETARY: Yes, Sire, where exactly?

BONAPARTE: Send him to the island of Elba.

(The Secretary bows as the lights fade.)

ACT II SCENE IV – 1802

Madame Bullet sitting alone on a bench in the office of the Commander-in-Chief in the central area. Toussaint comes in hurriedly. He kisses her hand and then bends over to embrace her. She turns away.

MME. BULLET: No, Toussaint, that is over. I have come to say goodbye. I want your permission for a passport to go to Paris. I have spent many years of my life in San Domingo. They have been exciting years. First, the revolution, then the abolition of slavery, and then, you. Now it's over. I want to go.

TOUSSAINT: But Madame Bullet. . .

MME. BULLET: *(angrily)* Do not call me that. If you do I shall call you Commander-in-Chief.

TOUSSAINT: Forgive me, Louise, but if you go I shall be left alone. Since I have become Governor, I scarcely have anyone here who I can call my friend. Over the years you have been the only one I can count on.

(Toussaint is once more a very human person. Madame Bullet takes a very stiff attitude.)

MME. BULLET: No! That is not true. There was the Comtesse de Noailles. There is the daughter of the man who is Secretary to the military staff. There is that woman who used to live on the big plantation next to ours. No.

Toussaint, you will not be alone, you will never be alone.

TOUSSAINT: Louise, you know better than that. You know me very well. I don't run after them.

MME. BULLET: Yes, I know you don't run after them, they run after you. But they always catch you. You are a very attractive man, Toussaint.

TOUSSAINT: Nonsense. They run after the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor of the Colony.

MME. BULLET: And the Commander-in-Chief and Governor of the Colony is quite happy to be persuaded by all these distinguished and handsome women.

TOUSSAINT: Louise, I live amidst constant and imminent dangers and catastrophes. These women distract me for a brief hour. That is all there is to it.

MME. BULLET: I quite believe you. Only all of it added together makes too much for me. I want a passport for Paris. It is over, Toussaint. You have your life to live and I am going to resume my own.

TOUSSAINT: You are going. Everybody wants to go. At least all the white people want to go. Why? We are not treating them in any way that is harsh or revengeful. In San Domingo slavery has been abolished and everybody is free and equal. Tell me, Louise, why do so many of you want to go?

MME. BULLET: I have told you my own reasons, Toussaint. You know that they have nothing to do with politics or race.

TOUSSAINT: Yes, I know. But the others . . . ?

MME. BULLET: I cannot speak for the others, but it is said that you will be naming General Moïse as your successor. It is said that Moïse is the second man in your Government. I believe that if he becomes ruler of San Domingo, all the whites will leave.

TOUSSAINT: So, if General Moïse becomes my successor, all the whites will leave.

MME. BULLET: No one understands why you put so much faith in him when he has publicly expressed his disagreement with your policies.

TOUSSAINT: So you believe that Moïse is bound to succeed me, that I am bound to him. Louise, my dear Louise, how often have I told you that in serious matters, do not listen to gossip. (*Toussaint becomes stern.*) Moïse will never be ruler of San Domingo. I am not bound to him. I am not bound to anybody. Even now, as I am speaking to you, Moïse is before a court-martial on trial for treason.

MME. BULLET: Moïse! For treason! Treason to you? Why, Toussaint, even as a boy in the old days he worshipped you.

TOUSSAINT: These are revolutionary times. Who you worship today you are ready to kill tomorrow and sometimes for very good reasons. You see, Louise—come and sit over here as you used to—(*She sits.*) you see, the country is very unsettled. Many people are quite sure that when the war is over the French will send an expedition to restore slavery.

MME. BULLET: But they will not do that.

TOUSSAINT: We hope not. But today, France is not the same France which abolished slavery. General Bonaparte, the First Consul, does not answer my letters. The country does not know where it stands. Moïse is leading a section of the population against me. Moïse wants a Declaration of Independence, like the United States. He wants independence, the severance of all connection with the French. (*Mars Plaisir enters.*) Is it General Dessalines?

MARSPLAISIR: Yes, Governor. And he has with him General Moïse, and a guard.

TOUSSAINT: ~~Ask General Dessalines to bring in General Moïse.~~ (*Madame Bullet rises to leave.*) No, Louise, don't go. Moïse knows you.

(*General Moïse enters between two soldiers. They are Marat and Orleans. General Dessalines behind him. Dessalines stands behind Moïse whose hands are bound behind his back. Moïse wears a black patch over one eye. Toussaint stands.*)

TOUSSAINT: What is the decision of the court-martial, General?

DESSALINES: Guilty on all counts. Sentence of death. I have the sentence here. It only awaits your signature, Governor.

TOUSSAINT: Give it to me. (*Dessalines hands it over. Toussaint reads and turns to General Moïse.*) Moïse, I have known you since you were a child. I

adopted you as my nephew. You have risen step by step until you have become a General, one of the most important officers in my army and a Governor of a province. Yet we hear reports from all sides that you are plotting to overthrow my regime. In recent revolts many were shouting "Moïse forever". You have been tried for treason, inciting rebellion and imperilling the state and now you have been found guilty. What have you to say? Why should I not sign this document?

MOISE: Sign or not, do as you please. I don't care what you do. I am not guilty of any treason. I have not plotted any rebellion. The court-martial knows that. You know that. If people in revolt shout my name it is because they are against your regime and they know I am against it too.

TOUSSAINT: You do not deny your guilt?

MOISE: What guilt? You speak like a public prosecutor. If to be against your policy is to be guilty of treason, then I am guilty, the most guilty man in San Domingo. But there are many thousands who think as I do.

TOUSSAINT: You are ready to overthrow the government of the country and place us at the mercy of our enemies?

MOISE: Your policy is placing us at the mercy of our enemies. I don't believe in maintaining the estates and giving them back to the old owners or the new generals. This one here (*Pointing to Dessalines*), he owns thirty plantations. And he whips the labourers on his plantations as if they were slaves.

TOUSSAINT: That is not true.

MOISE: It is true. I have investigated it myself and I reported it to you. You have done nothing about it.

TOUSSAINT: General Dessalines, report to General Moïse what has been done about this matter.

DESSALINES: (*At attention*) The Governor has informed me by letter and in person that if he heard of a single case on which a labourer was beaten on any of my plantations he would dismiss me from the service or reduce me to the ranks.

MOISE: Maybe you wrote to him and threatened him. But this brutality against the former slaves goes on all over San Domingo. I will have no part of it, I will speak against it and act wherever I see it or hear of it. The person

responsible for it, Governor L'Ouverture, is you. I have said it and I shall continue to say it, court-martial or no court-martial. The country does not know where it stands. Is slavery abolished forever? Or is a French expedition coming to restore slavery? The ex-slaves don't know, the ex-slave owners don't know. I have told you to declare the island independent. Expel all those who do not want to accept it. Assure the ex-slaves that slavery is gone forever. That is what they want to know. Break up those accursed big plantations. As long as they remain, freedom is a mockery. Distribute the lands carefully among the best cultivators in the country. Let everybody see that there is a new regime. That is what I have said and that is what I will stand or fall by.

TOUSSAINT: *(Earnestly)* Ten years ago I took over the island. It was overrun with marauding soldiers and bandits. The Spanish government sent fifty-thousand soldiers, the British sixty-thousand. We defeated them and drove them out. Production had almost ceased. But I have changed things. Now it is two-thirds of what it was before; all within a year. Except for bandits in the hills I have restored peace and order. All we need now is some help from France.

MOISE: You are a dreamer. All you will get from Bonaparte is an army—to restore slavery. Dessalines knows that. He is always saying it to the people.

DESSALINES: *(Impatiently)* Governor, what about the paper?

TOUSSAINT: Keep him under arrest. I shall sign the order of execution later.

MOISE: Yes, Toussaint, you shall sign later. You will use your pen like a sword. *(He advances nearer Toussaint.)* But you will see, that until you use your sword like a man—*(He is now so close to Toussaint that Dessalines signals to Marat and Orleans, they grab at Moïse who, though bound, shakes them off like flies)*—until you cut yourself off from all the symbols of colonialism and slavery *(He has taken in Madame Bullet with a withering sweep of his one good eye)* and be truly independent, you will remain just an old man with a dream of an impossible fraternity. *(A mirthless, almost soundless, laugh.)* Pitiful old Toussaint—and his dream.

(Moïse turns abruptly and walks off. Marat and Orleans have to hurry to catch up. Dessalines stands looking at Toussaint as if seeing him for the first time, then he too leaves. Toussaint, stunned, begins to walk a few steps downstage like a sleepwalker. He puts a hand to his forehead. Mars Plaisir makes as if to go towards him. Madame Bullet motions to Mars Plaisir that he

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should leave the room. He exits. Toussaint begins slowly to talk to himself. As he continues what is a self-examination, he gradually becomes more and more excited.)

TOUSSAINT: I adopted him as a son, made him my nephew. He was always the wise one and Moïse, the man of books, is now the most popular man in the army. Yet we have to kill Moïse. The safety of the state demands that I kill Moïse. Everywhere the labourers shout "Long live Moïse." Moïse says what they think and what I know. And yet the safety of the state demands that we remove him. I have had enough. All I do is crush my own people. People are ready to revolt all over the island. They are right. But revolt to get what? This mock freedom. They shout "Long live Moïse!" What they mean is "Down with Toussaint." *(He looks savagely at Louise.)* The blacks want to kill the whites and why shouldn't they? Madame Bullet, why do I protect the whites? Why must I, a black, shoot blacks to protect whites? Always the whites have to be protected. Why? Whites don't love blacks. They tolerate them. That's all. I am a traitor to my own colour. The blacks are beginning to hate me—the whites hate me already.

(Madame Bullet stretches out her hand half way to Toussaint. He takes no notice of it, intent only on his descent into his depths.)

MME. BULLET: But, Toussaint, the whites have confidence in you. The whites want you to rule.

TOUSSAINT: Madame Bullet, the whites don't want me to rule. I am the person responsible for taking them from up there and putting them where they are today. If they get the chance they will restore slavery tomorrow and make me a slave again. Toussaint L'Ouverture, black man, former slave. Commander-in-Chief of the Army? Governor of the colony? How could whites want me? No. What they want is to be masters again. This slavery demands that a black man be a slave and a white man a master. There was a revolution. The tables are turned. Now the blacks should become masters and the whites should become slaves. That is what ought to be. I am attempting to do the impossible.

(Madame Bullet moves to Toussaint and looks into his eyes with an almost medical concern.)

MME. BULLET: Toussaint, you are not well. What are you saying? How could half a million blacks be masters and twenty thousand whites be slaves?

TOUSSAINT: (*Tormentedly*) Don't ask me. I don't know. All I know is that whatever is, is wrong. (*Madame Bullet leads Toussaint over to the bench. She dries his forehead with her handkerchief. His voice sinks again, but with a curiously bitter nostalgia.*) My wife and I had a small plot of land. We did what M. Bullet told me to do and as long as we did that we were free. Year by year, my wife and I grew closer together, watching over the children. Where are my sons today? I sent them to France, to be educated. General Bonaparte keeps them as prisoners. I write to Bonaparte asking him to send me a commissioner, teachers, priests, skilled workmen—and my children. He does not reply. Bonaparte believes that I will submit to his commands out of fear for my children's safety. He gives me a choice between my love for my sons and my love for my country. And now I have to kill Moïse. If he is not silenced, everything is ruined. The Army will mutiny and we will be fighting against one another instead of preparing for a French invasion. God! To go back to my little plot of land with my wife and the boys on a Sunday morning. . . By law I was a slave, but I was free. Now by law I am free, but I am a slave. I am worse; I am a master of slaves. Moïse! I have to kill Moïse! (*His outburst is over. He is standing. Deeply moved, Madame Bullet moves to him and reaches out to him.*)

MME. BULLET: Toussaint, I know how you must feel. Moïse is a very dangerous man; he is dangerous because he believes everything he says. He believes that he is right and you are wrong. He may be naive but he is a brave soldier. You have told me so many times. You trained him yourself. You will do what you think is right, Toussaint. But you do not have to kill Moïse. Don't sign that order. Tell me. How can I help you? There have been bad times before now when I have helped you. I will do whatever you want.

TOUSSAINT: Louise, I need your help more than anything else. I need your help. I have written another letter to General Bonaparte, telling him all that we are doing here, that all we need is a word of encouragement and an assurance that the liberties of the people in San Domingo are safe. (*Toussaint turns to her and speaks as if giving commands to his staff.*) Go to Paris, Louise. I will prepare a special letter for you. See General Bonaparte. Tell him that the policy of General L'Ouverture rules San Domingo. France abolished slavery. As long as France is faithful to us, we shall be faithful to France. Go, Louise. A boat leaves tomorrow. Your passport and all the letters will be ready.

(*By this time Madame Bullet realises that Toussaint is not thinking of her as much as he is wrapped up in his own plans. She is nodding in agreement.*)

MME. BULLET: Yes, Toussaint. Yes, Commander-in-Chief. I will do whatever you say, whatever you want. I will go to Paris tomorrow morning. I will do all that I can to see General Bonaparte, to tell him all you want me to tell him. *(Her tears are too much to be contained and she cannot speak any more. Toussaint realises what he has been doing and tries to make amends.)*

TOUSSAINT: Louise, forgive me. Here you are offering to give me what I needed so much and all I can do is ask you to undertake a political mission. Louise, forgive me, I could not help it.

MME BULLET: *(Smiling)* Yes, I know you, Toussaint. You could not help it. But remember, I first came to you for a passport. I wanted to go and now I know that I must go. I wanted to get away from you and, as usual, you are doing what I wanted.

TOUSSAINT: And now I will do what we both want: Moïse will not be shot I will send him on a mission abroad.

MME. BULLET: But will he go?

TOUSSAINT: He will have to. Leave it to me. I will see to it.

MME. BULLET: *(Holding his hand)* Toussaint.

(Dessalines bursts into the room with a piece of paper in his hand.)

DESSALINES: Toussaint! The French fleet is here! The message has just come. Hundreds of vessels. They have sent an army. It is war.

(Toussaint moves over to Dessalines and reads the message. He looks up from it.)

TOUSSAINT: So Bonaparte has decided for war. All this uncertainty is over. War it will be. How many ships are there?

DESSALINES: Our watchers have counted five hundred and there are more coming.

TOUSSAINT: France has come to overwhelm us. Dessalines, we must sound the retreat. But before we do, we must use our only weapons: destruction and fire.

DESSALINES: I have already told my men that they must tear up the roads with shot; that they must throw dead horses in all the drinking water; that they must burn and destroy everything. Our soil must not nourish the enemy.

TOUSSAINT: Good. Now we must muster our forces for the retreat, and plan for the counter-attack.

DESSALINES: It will be done, Toussaint. But first . . . the death warrant. *(Toussaint hesitates, looks at Madame Bullet, who stares back wide-eyed, with a hand at her mouth.)* It is war. Our ranks must be closed. All of us are behind you, Toussaint. And who is not with us is against us. Sign the paper and give it to me.

(Toussaint sits at his desk, picks up his pen and looks against at Madame Bullet. Dessalines puts his hand out firmly. Toussaint slowly signs the paper and hands it to Dessalines. Dessalines reaches for it. The lights fade on the tableau.)

END OF ACT TWO

ACT III SCENE I 1802

Soldiers are arranging furniture in a plantation living room similar to that of Act I, Scene II. This is Dessalines' unofficial headquarters. Marat (now a Sergeant and an experienced soldier) is seeing that things are in order. Orleans is a corporal. Both are elegantly dressed as befits their rise in rank. Mars Plaisir is standing looking off upstage. Orleans is doing the work.

ORLEANS: Things look pretty bad. Things look pretty bad.

MARAT: You are always seeing the worst of things.

ORLEANS: What could be worse than Governor Toussaint's surrender? Now we are back under the French and. . .

MARAT: Our army is still there. If the French General attempts any nonsense, he will have to deal with us.

ORLEANS: Mars, what did the General say? What is he going to do?

MARS: *(Disturbed from his thoughts)* General L'Ouverture has retired to his plantation. But he is coming here today. I am waiting for him. I don't know what he will do, Orleans.

ORLEANS: In a revolution you never know. In France, they killed the Duke of Orleans, they killed Jean-Paul Marat. They have also killed Maximillian Robespierre.

MARAT: Yes, And here, they shoot our Max, too. After the Governor shot General Moïse, Max, his man, had to go. As you say, in a revolution, you never know. But if the French commander attempts to bring back slavery here, the army and the people will drive every Frenchman into the sea.

ORLEANS: Yes, that is what we will have to do. If we can.

MARAT: You and your "if we can". That is what we will do. They can't kill all of us, but we can kill all of them.

(Dessalines, Christophe and Toussaint have entered on these words. Toussaint is in civilian clothes.)

DESSALINES: "They can't kill all of us, but we can kill all of them." Good, Sergeant Marat; for saying that you deserve promotion. Lieutenant Marat, your first duty is to supervise the patrols. If necessary, reinforce them.
(Marat, very pleased, salutes and turns to leave with Orleans.)

TOUSSAINT: Mars, go with them.

DESSALINES: Lieutenant Marat *(Marat halts and turns back.)* Have Samedi Smith relieved and sent here. Let him stand near, I will need him soon.

(Marat salutes. Marat, Orleans and Mars Plaisir exit. Dessalines takes some snuff from his snuff-box, sneezes. Christophe goes to the window and closes it.)

DESSALINES: We are quite safe here. Only trusted men are on guard and my wife keeps an eye on them.

TOUSSAINT: Marie-Jeanne is well?

DESSALINES: Too well. Marie-Jeanne insists on fighting side by side with me. And I believe she likes the life in the bush more than all that music and all those books. All night she reads by the camp fire. Thank goodness I never learned to read. *(Dessalines slaps twice on the table. Enter a black peasant. He carries a rifle. Though barefooted and in rags he is undoubtedly a man of authority.)* Say what your name is.

SAMEDI: My name is Samedi Smith.

TOUSSAINT: Samedi Smith. You used to be the leader of a band of people in arms against my government?

DESSALINES: Yes, General. He ~~was~~ one of those whom we used to call brigands, and now the French invaders call them brigands. But there is Macaya at Limbe; Sylla, in the mountains of Plaisance; and Sans-Souci; all formerly enemies of our government. They refused to surrender to us. And now they have refused to surrender to the French.

CHRISTOPHE: But we have made peace with the French! All these men were bandits, gangsters and robbers under Toussaint's regime. They still are bandits. If we and the French really combined our forces we could crush them and then have some law and order.

SAMEDI: We were gangsters once but now we are fighting for freedom. General Leclerc ask us to give up our guns. That we won't do. M. Sonthonax, a white man, used to tell us anybody who ask you to give up your guns, he means to restore slavery. *(He speaks with a certain restraint looking at Toussaint out of the corner of his eye.)* And the Governor used to tell us so himself. That was before he made peace with General Leclerc.

DESSALINES: Tell the Governor.

SAMEDI: *(Speaking with great animation)* We were short of ammunition, so all of us from the mountain, all around Port-de-Paix, drove out to garrison, killed the white men, burned the houses they had rebuilt, and took possession of the fort. We found twenty-five thousand pounds of powder.

TOUSSAINT: A wonderful feat. But did you get away with all of it?

DESSALINES: All of it. And most of that powder is now in a safe place. Men, women and children loaded themselves with it and carried it off. But you know who was their chief enemy? Christophe! He was sent by Leclerc to cut them off.

CHRISTOPHE: What you expected me to do? From the time General L'Ouverture submitted, and asked us to submit, General Leclerc constantly sends the local Generals to suppress those whom he calls brigands, enemies of the French Government. You suppress them too, General Dessalines. You obey his orders too!

DESSALINES: Yes, I carry out General Leclerc's orders, and I suppress brigands. But I only suppress the ones that disagree with me.

CHRISTOPHE: You believe you can win independence with people like him?

DESSALINES: If we ever win independence it will be with people like him, not with people like you. *(To Toussaint.)* General, all of us believe that although you made peace you just waiting for the time to move.

(He looks at Toussaint and Christophe, and Dessalines looks at Toussaint also. There is a long silence.)

TOUSSAINT: Samedi Smith! You, Macaya, Jean Panier and all others like you hold the defence of freedom in your hands. I submitted, and asked my generals to submit. It was to prevent the complete destruction of what we have fought so hard to build up. But I insisted that the army should retain its arms. Once the army and the people retain their arms, slavery can never be restored.

DESSALINES: General, the arms of the army are being used against the people. I am afraid of what I see ahead. General, you have led us to victory when the cause, everything, seemed lost. Lead us, now. Say what to do. Whatever you say will be done.

TOUSSAINT: We have to wait and see. I cannot believe that the French Government will attempt to restore the slavery which they and they alone have abolished. General Dessalines, General Christophe. Our people need the help that only France can give. They can't read, they can't write, they have no skills, no knowledge of governing, no knowledge of God. We must hold on and hope that we shall arrive at some understanding . . . I am no longer a General. I have retired, and only if our liberty is threatened shall I once more place myself at the head of our people. As long as the people have their arms we are safe. *(Toussaint stands. Christophe and Dessalines stand also.)* General Dessalines, we shall meet at my plantation at Ennery on Wednesday morning at nine. I shall wait for you in the usual place. General Christophe, my respects to your wife. Samedi Smith, I remember you . . . You . . . had been promoted in my division before you took to the hills. . .

SAMEDI: God bless you, Governor, God bless you.

TOUSSAINT: We all need His blessing. Good night. *(Dessalines moves to go out with him.)* No, Dessalines, Mars will go with me. We shall ride through the night and be in Ennery by morning.

(Toussaint leaves. As soon as he goes, Christophe turns to Dessalines.)

CHRISTOPHE: I have to return to headquarters, General Dessalines. I expect to meet you there, soon.

DESSALINES: Sit down, Christophe. I want to talk to you. Samedi, you and your men wait. I want to see you before you go.

(Samedi salutes and leaves. Christophe sits unwillingly. Coming from upstage are male voices softly in chorus. They sing Samedi Smith's song. Dessalines moves upstage and looks towards the singing. He returns to the table, ignoring Christophe, and takes some snuff. He sneezes. Christophe is obviously uncomfortable.)

CHRISTOPHE: What do you want from me?

DESSALINES: Why do you think I want something of you? *(The chorus from outside becomes clearer and stronger.)* You hear that song?

CHRISTOPHE: No. Yes, of course I hear it.

DESSALINES: You know what it is?

CHRISTOPHE: No, I don't know it. The brigands sing it. It is their song now. They used to sing "La Marseillaise" and the "Ca Ira" but the French soldiers always sing those so the brigands have started to sing this as their song.

DESSALINES: This is it; listen, Christophe. *(He half-sings, half-recites with a pervading irony which sometimes intensifies the interpretation.)*

*A l'attaque, brave soldat,
Et qui périt, c'est son affaire.
A l'attaque, grenadier,
Et qui va tomber, reste sur la terre.*

To the attack, brave soldier,
Who gets killed is his affair.
To the attack, grenadier,
And whoever falls remains on the ground.

*Oublier ta maman et ton père,
Et qui périt, c'est son affaire.
Oublier tous tes soeurs et tes frères,
Et qui va tomber, reste sur la terre.*

Forget your ma, forget your pa
Who gets killed is his affair.
Forget your sister, forget your brothers
And whoever falls remains on the ground.

(Drumming increases rapidly in tempo.)

CHRISTOPHE: And that means voodoo.

DESSALINES: Absolutely not. *(Shouts.) Samedi! (Dessalines goes to the rear of the room and calls in a stentorian voice.) Samedi! (At the sound of his voice the drumming stops abruptly. Samedi comes in looking somewhat guilty.) Samedi, no more of that drumming. No Voodoo. Anybody in my detachment who practises Voodoo will be shot on the spot. No Voodoo and none of that drumming. (Samedi turns to go.) A salute, Sergeant Samedi.*

(Samedi salutes. Dessalines replies and Samedi retreats.)

CHRISTOPHE: Why have you stopped the drumming? When Toussaint was Governor, he gave those instructions, but those days are over.

DESSALINES: When it came to governing the country, Toussaint was always right.

CHRISTOPHE: But General Leclerc and all the French generals say that the people can drum and dance voodoo as they like. Madame Leclerc is absolutely fascinated by the voodoo. As a matter of fact, in the old days, they say, you were a great voodoo dancer yourself, General Dessalines.

DESSALINES: After one time is another. For instance, now you are for voodoo and you have always been against it. Always in church worshipping their God, Jesus Christ. You also were very stern in putting it down; and if I remember, you would shoot voodoo dancers almost at sight. I heard you say that voodoo prevented the population from becoming good citizens and Christians and warning about liberty and equality and the whole set of principles that come from France.

CHRISTOPHE: Yes, yes. I was merciless against voodoo in my province. Those were the orders of Toussaint and I believed that voodoo and all that savagery stood in the way of our progress, but today I am for anything that will satisfy the people. . .

DESSALINES: And also satisfy General Leclerc.

CHRISTOPHE: All right, but as I see it, Dessalines, if they want voodoo, let them have voodoo.

DESSALINES: No!

CHRISTOPHE: I have to go now, Dessalines.

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DESSALINES: I know (*contemptuously*). Give my compliments to General Leclerc. But Christophe, I want you to give him a message. From me.

(*Christophe sits down again.*)

CHRISTOPHE: What message?

DESSALINES: I am ordering a concentration of all the forces under my command at Grande Riviere. This is for his ears only. The time of concentration will be on Wednesday morning. At 9 o'clock.

CHRISTOPHE: But on Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock, you are meeting Toussaint at Ennery!

DESSALINES: On Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock I will be in personal command of an operation to clear Grande Riviere and its neighbourhood of brigands. You will tell General Leclerc that Toussaint will be at Ennery. That I leave to you, Christophe. (*Christophe at last seems to understand what Dessalines is saying to him. He rises and begins to take his leave. He reaches the door and in fact has begun to open it when Dessalines speaks again.*) By the way, Christophe, Toussaint, on Wednesday morning, will be alone in the pavilion at the end of the garden. As usual, all his men will be at work on the plantation. 9 o'clock exactly. Remember, he is never early and never late.

(*Christophe, with understanding dawning in his face, looks at Dessalines for a moment and then, like a man carrying unexpectedly good news, hastens away. Marie-Jeanne enters, her eyes fixed on Dessalines. She is wearing military dress, trousers and high boots, both spattered with mud. But her bodice is frilly and her hair is carefully done. She stands somewhat behind Dessalines, her hands holding the top of the chair. After a period of silence, Dessalines rises, saying half to himself: I must see about. . . He turns to face Marie-Jeanne. He is startled to see her.*)

MARIE-JEANNE: Dessalines, we have to be at Ennery on Wednesday morning. I would be glad if we could leave early on Tuesday so I could spend some time with Madame O'Ouverture and the family.

(*Dessalines turns to her with fury. The orchestra quietly but clearly begins to play "Vendetta ti Chieggio la Chiedo il tuo cor."*)

DESSALINES: You have been listening! How do you know I am going to Ennery on Wednesday morning? We shall be far from Ennery and you will be with me, Marie-Jeanne. If I hear any more of this from you or anybody else I will kill you.

MARIE-JEANNE: Kill me now. You are a killer. Yes, I was listening. I understand everything. Kill me, Dessalines. Kill me before you go to Grand Riviere. I know--

DESSALINES: You know! What do you know?

MARIE-JEANNE: I know that you are plotting to get Toussaint killed.

DESSALINES: You are a blind fool. Why should I want to get Toussaint killed?

MARIE-JEANNE: To become chief under General Leclerc. To become a house slave once again. I was one, too, remember? I was the woman of M. Bullet. I had to sleep with him and report to him any movement or talk of insurrection among the slaves. I thought, General Dessalines, that we had left all that spying and informing behind. But I see that you want to become the head of the house-slaves. And in the end, Toussaint will be shot. Well, after Toussaint, your turn will come and I will be a house-slave again, to sleep. . .

DESSALINES: Hold your tongue, woman.

MARIE-JEANNE: I will not hold my tongue. That is all I have left. The other day, I, the wife of the great General Dessalines, was driving along the Main Street in Port-au-Prince and I saw M. Bullet standing in the crowd. He saw me, our eyes met, and I know when the old regime is here once more, he will seek me out to become his woman again. During these last days in battle I was near to death many times. I wish I had been killed.

(Dessalines goes to her.)

DESSALINES: Sit down, woman, and listen to me. *(Marie-Jeanne continues to stare at him but makes no move. Dessalines strikes her twice across the face and forces her down into the chair. The orchestra plays the Mozart aria more strongly than ever. However, as Dessalines speaks it gradually declines until by the time he is finished it has died away.)* Sit down, I tell you: I have arranged for Toussaint to be captured, not killed. He will not be killed. General Leclerc has been wanting to put his hands on Toussaint since his surrender. I always told them that if they did without my consent an insurrection would break out at once, all over the island. Now the insurrection is near. The man who stands in the way, Marie-Jeanne, is Toussaint. Don't say a word, woman. It is Toussaint who stands in the way. He will never give the signal the people are waiting for. He still believes in liberty and equality and a whole lot of nonsense that he had learned from the French. All I have learnt

from the French is that without arms in my hand there is no freedom. The people still believe that Toussaint is their leader; but I am their leader and when he goes they will know that. From the time he had to kill Moïse he has not been the same man. Moïse was right. But he had to be shot then. Now the whole thing is changed. Moïse's ideas are flourishing in new soil. You see Samedi Smith out there and his men. There are thousands more. When Toussaint is removed they will look to me. And I will lead them. We will drive every Frenchman into the sea. Now you can talk. These last months you were often puzzled at what I was doing. Now you know. *(Marie-Jeanne looks up at Dessalines as if she is seeing him for the first time.)* Toussaint has to go. And it is the French who have to take him.

MARIE-JEANNE: But they will kill him.

DESSALINES: No, they will not kill him. *(Shouting because he is uncertain.)* They will not dare. They will take him straight to the boat that is now in the harbour, it will sail for France at once.

MARIE-JEANNE: *(Still somewhat overwhelmed)* And Madame Toussaint? What will happen to her?

DESSALINES: She will be taken to France with him. And Mars Plaisir, his man, to see after them. They will do what I say. They believe that Dessalines is nothing but an ambitious savage. You believe that too. But now you should know that though I am a savage, I am no fool. The future of this country depends on me. You come with me, Marie-Jeanne, or you will be killed. I will kill you with my own hands.

(There is a long pause during which Marie-Jeanne is obviously adjusting herself to an entirely new situation.)

MARIE-JEANNE: Come here, Jean-Jacques, and sit at my feet as you used to do when we first married. Don't be afraid. You have always been afraid of me. I must set that right. *(Dessalines knows that he has won and he comes docilely and sits at her feet. Marie-Jeanne puts her hand on his head.)* Jean-Jacques, when I married you I was not in love with you.

DESSALINES: I know. I was a barbarian, they used to call me the Tiger. Toussaint told you to marry me in order to civilise me a bit, to make me fit for the high position that I hold. I was General of Division, Governor of a Province and second only to Toussaint, but I could not read and in many things I was still the slave I had always been. That is why you married me, Marie-Jeanne, I know that. Toussaint told you.

MARIE-JEANNE: No, Toussaint never told me that.

DESSALINES: No, I know he never said that. That is a thing Toussaint would never say. But I know, Marie-Jeanne.

MARIE-JEANNE: Jean-Jacques, you listen to me now. When I married you, you were rough and often brutal. But little by little I grew to understand you, the kind of man you were, and your devotion to Toussaint. And these days, fighting with you in the bush, even though you were not telling me what you were doing or why, I fell in love with you, Dessalines. I trusted you completely. Here in San Domingo, people don't trust one another. For the first time in all my life, a man, my husband, meant something to me. In every battle in the bush, I was a person next to you, watching over you, ready to give my life for yours. Life meant nothing to me without you. Nothing. And just then, when I heard you plotting Toussaint's capture, I thought for a moment you had betrayed me, but I understand now. Whatever you say I will do. You will go to Grande Riviere and I, Jean-Jacques, will find my way to the mulattoes and talk to General Pétion. You have often said you wanted someone you could trust to talk to General Pétion.

DESSALINES: That you can. Better than I. Go to him, Marie-Jeanne.

(She stands. Dessalines stands. She puts her arms around his shoulders and leans her head on his breast.)

MARIE-JEANNE: I will win Pétion over. I know the mulattoes are in deadly fear of what will happen to them if slavery is restored. They are waiting on Pétion. We will fight to the end and we will win. They can't beat you, Jean-Jacques, nobody can. But Toussaint! He took us from nothing, you and me, and made us what we are. It is hard, Jean-Jacques.

DESSALINES: It is hard. The times we live in are hard. *(A pause.)* Tell me that thing I like so much.

(Marie-Jeanne moves away from him and somewhat self-consciously, at least at the beginning, recites.)

MARIE-JEANNE: I fondly hoped that Heaven above
Would guard a silence to conceal this love.
But my poor heart, twisted and torn with pain
Impels me now to speak, never to speak again.
What were my hopes? I can no longer tell.
Except to know my love was born in Hell.

Achilles did not by any pretended grief
Encourage me to hope for quick relief.
Twas Heaven itself that with its cruel dart
Applied new torture to my bleeding heart.
To you, that bitter day needs no recall
When both of us were swept into his thrall.
But me, he raped; long hours I lay
Unknowing whether it was night or day.
I fought with storms and when I stemmed the flood,
The arms that circled me were stained with blood.
Doris, I froze. My eyes refused to see
The face that sponsored such brutality.
He led me off. All that remained was pride
I would not watch him, kept my gaze aside
And then I saw him. There was only calm
In his kind face. It soothed my pain like balm.
My heart declared for him. Instead of fears
I could say nothing except floods of tears

(Now Dessalines joins in and they say the last two lines together, as drums begin very softly in the distance.)

My strength returned, once more I knew my will
I loved him then and now I love him still.

(Dessalines embraces her.)

DESSALINES: You mean they really used to speak like that?

MARIE-JEANNE: Yes, so it says in the book.

DESSALINES: And you say this man was not a General.

MARIE-JEANNE: No. I told you he wrote plays. His name was Racine. The play is called Iphigénie!

(The drums are louder.)

DESSALINES: Well, that suits them in France. In France they write plays.
But listen, listen. That is San Domingo. We can't write plays about voodoo!

(Marie-Jeanne stares at him. The lights fade as Dessalines stares back at her.)

ACT III SCENE II – 1803

Orleans enters with a huge throne-like chair.

ORLEANS: Things are looking pretty good. Pretty good.

MARAT: Yes, we have come a long way from the days when we used to arrange meetings in the forest. General Dessalines will be the next Governor of San Domingo.

ORLEANS: Yes, if we drive out the French army. If we don't all of us are done.

MARAT: We must win. General Dessalines does not lose any battles. We, the black people, have the power now.

ORLEANS: Yes, if we defeat the French.

MARAT: Enough of that. You are still with your "if we beat the French." You were a slave and you are fit for nothing else but being a slave. I hear the General.

(As staff enter on one side, the two men move toward the other. A body of officers, soldiers, civilians, etc., enter. They are a government as well as military gathering. Among them is General Christophe. There is a whisper, people saying to each other: He is coming. Here he comes! etc. General Dessalines enters. He is master of himself and all around him. He is now Commander-in-Chief. He moves to the big chair in the centre of the room, which now has a table in front of it. As he sits, he speaks.)

DESSALINES: No news from General Pétion yet?

MARAT: Yes sir. He has sent you someone.

DESSALINES: Why didn't you call me? Where is he?

MULATTO OFFICER: Sir, General Pétion sends to say that he expects by the time I reach here, the detachment of General Rochambeau's army in front of him will be defeated. He has them surrounded with their backs against the Gulf of Port-au-Prince.

(Dessalines rises in triumph.)

DESSALINES: That is the end. The mulattoes have not failed us. Friends, the French expedition is finished. They will have to sue for peace. We have won. I knew it. Once we had made up our minds we would have beaten Bonaparte himself. *(He points to the Mulatto Officer.)* You are a Lieutenant?

MULATTO OFFICER: Yes, sir.

DESSALINES: You are now a Captain. But you are wounded.

OFFICER: Yes, General.

DESSALINES: Well, not a Captain, you are now a Major. ~~Christophe, see to it. A proper uniform.~~ Our friends, the mulattoes, have done well. *(Christophe steps forward, takes the officer by the arm and leads him away. Dessalines speaks half to himself.)* I knew we could. *(To the staff.)* By tomorrow morning there will not be a French soldier on this island. *(Marat whispers to Dessalines.)* Bring him in. Bring him in at once. *(Marat goes out and returns with a French Officer. Dessalines does not allow the French Officer to speak.)* I know what you want. You came here to make negotiations, conditions for a retreat and all that bowing and saluting and games that Toussaint used to carry on with you. No negotiations here, no conditions. Tell your General that he and his army have till four o'clock in the morning to get on their ships and leave our waters. The British fleet is waiting to engage you. But that is your business. You had no right here to begin with. But let your General know that for the last two days I have been preparing red hot shot, and if by tomorrow morning at sunrise the French are not out of every piece of our territory, I shall burn you alive. That is my message. Those are the only negotiations I have to make. Now get out. *(The French officer, terrified, turns and walks out. Dessalines sits at the table working off his anger.)*

Now the moment has come. Bring me a French flag. *(A French tri-colour flag is brought to him by Orleans. He rises and tears off the white.)* Our flag will have no white in it. We will keep the blue for the sea that surrounds and defends us, and I want the red for the blood of the blacks and the mulattoes who have liberated our country. The land is now ours. That is our flag. Now we need a name. No more San Domingo. The name that the Caribs gave to the country before the French came here! What is the name? *(There is a ragged chorus of: Haiti—pronounced Ha-ee-tee.)* Haiti! That is our name now. Haiti! *(The crowd take it up and shout: Haiti! Haiti! Haiti! Dessalines sits back at the table.)* Now we are independent. We own the soil. We have our own name. We have our own flag. Let us have wine and some music. Call my wife. *(Messengers fly in different directions.)* And now I have to tell you all something. I have been waiting for this moment and now the moment has come. I am going to be Emperor of Haiti. Emperor, not King for London

They offered Toussaint to be King and he didn't take it. But nobody is going to offer me anything. I, Dessalines, am going to be Emperor of Haiti. Napoleon wants to be Emperor of France. I will be Emperor of Haiti. Dessalines, Emperor of Haiti.

(The crowd is somewhat uncertain at first but, led by MARAT, they shout.)

CROWD: Dessalines! Emperor of Haiti! Emperor!

(Dessalines has risen but he sits down again.)

DESSALINES: Now I shall tell you more. Tomorrow, the Emperor will issue a proclamation. The time has come. We are going to kill every white man and woman on this island. They will never be able to restore slavery here because we are going to get rid of all of them. Not one is going to remain. *(His staff is obviously startled and shocked at this proposal. Christophe re-enters.)* You fools are not ready for that? Look at what we have had to suffer from these people. Man, woman and child, not one of them is going to be left alive. No more slavery here. That proclamation I shall issue tomorrow, signed by me—Dessalines, Emperor of Haiti. I have learnt to sign my name, Dessalines. I will learn to sign Emperor. All will be killed. All.

(There is a continuing murmur of opposition in the room. Christophe steps forward.)

CHRISTOPHE: General . . .

(Dessalines interrupts him with a roar.)

DESSALINES: Not General, Emperor.

CHRISTOPHE: Yes, Emperor. If you will allow me, your majesty, General Pétion will have to be consulted before such a proclamation is . . .

DESSALINES: Christophe, you are against but again afraid to say so.

CHRISTOPHE: All I am saying, your majesty, is that before you issue a proclamation you should consult General Pétion.

DESSALINES: I will consult him. I will tell him that I have issued a proclamation. That will be enough. He will understand.

CHRISTOPHE: Emperor, that would be the wrong way to show the world your imperial power.

DESSALINES: The Emperor decides what is right and wrong; don't you ever forget that, Christophe. Now that I am Emperor you are head of the army, but no General will ever tell me what to do.

CHRISTOPHE: As your Imperial Majesty decides. Right or wrong.

(A silence in the room among officers and civilians alike. Dessalines glares at them and they look at him in what is not far from terror. The tension is broken by the entrance of an orderly. Dessalines addresses him somewhat roughly.)

DESSALINES: What is it?

ORDERLY: There is someone here to see you, sir, Emperor.

DESSALINES: If it is a Frenchman, I will not see him.

ORDERLY: It is not a Frenchman, Emperor. It is an Englishman. His name is Cathcart.

DESSALINES: Show him in

(Cathcart enters. He bows to Dessalines.)

CATHCART: I am Cathcart, General Dessalines, representative of powerful British trading interests. I have my papers here. Everyone is assured of your victory over the French and I have various propositions to make to the rulers of the colony.

DESSALINES: This is no longer a colony, no more French San Domingo. It is the independent state of Haiti and I, Dessalines, am the Emperor of Haiti.

(Cathcart is a little startled. But he is a man of great self-assurance. He bows very low.)

CATHCART: Emperor, I am glad to be one of the earliest to congratulate you on the high position you have assumed. This somewhat affects the proposals I have to make to you. Can I see you in private, Emperor?

DESSALINES: Certainly, you can see the Emperor in private. Go away everybody!

(All turn and leave the room rapidly. Christophe is the last to go and lingers long enough to appraise the situation. Cathcart briefly glances at him, then delicately takes some snuff from the back of his thumb. Dessalines looks on, waiting for a sneeze. Nothing happens. Cathcart offers his snuff-box, but Dessalines declines.)

CATHCART: Emperor, the interests I represent are ready to come to terms with the new rulers, you, about trade with this country. Very special consideration will be given to you in any agreement with Britain. I have all the papers here but there is one consideration for your ear and your ear alone.

(Dessalines is at once suspicious.)

DESSALINES: What is it?

CATHCART: Sir, Emperor, the interests I represent have been expecting that you would defeat the French and chase them out of this island. British and American interests have supported you in your struggle, you know that, but they have told me that there is one necessity before the establishment of beneficial trade relations. That necessity is your vengeance for all that you have suffered. You have to show who is master here. If you do that, we can come to terms. If you do not, we shall not be able to make any permanent arrangements with you. You need our commerce to rebuild the island. These are my instructions.

(Dessalines laughs, rises and shakes him by the hand.)

DESSALINES: That will not be difficult. That is exactly what I intend to do. The proclamation calling upon the population to kill every Frenchman upon the island will be published *(Pause, as he remembers his exchange with Christophe.)* soon. But sit down. *(He forces Cathcart into a chair.)* Tell me. Why do your "British trading interests" want all the French on the island killed? I know why I am going to kill them. We suffered from them. They made us slaves because they said we were not men. When we behaved like men and fought for our freedom, they called us monsters. Now we behave like they do. But you have not suffered from them. They are white people just like you. I don't understand.

CATHCART: Emperor, you are now head of a state and of course you know the political realities of the day. The British interests that I represent wanted to be quite certain that whoever ruled in Haiti, will not one day restore close relations with the French. After all, you speak their language. You are very

French. Restoration of good relations between you and the French would mean the destruction of British trade and influence here. However, if you kill them all, you draw a line of blood between France and your new black country. You and France will never get together again.

DESSALINES: Mr. Cathcart, as long as Dessalines is Emperor of Haiti, France and Haiti will remain mortal enemies. But if to kill every Frenchman and woman on the island will also ensure me the friendship of the British, then there is no doubt that it will be done. We understand one another, Mr. Cathcart.

CATHCART: Emperor, we understand one another.

DESSALINES: We must celebrate.

CATHCART: Ah, Emperor, one more thing, please. You are of course, certain of the support of all your government in this action? I understand that one of your generals, Henri Christophe . . .

DESSALINES: Christophe will do what I say. He is master of the rest, but I am master of him. Ho there! *(The staff and others come back in. They obviously were just outside.)* ~~You have brought the wine and music? Wine for me and for our new friend, Mr. Catheart. For everybody wine. And some music.~~

(The musicians enter. Wine is brought in. A toast is drunk, with glasses raised to Dessalines, Emperor of Haiti. Preceded by Orleans, Marie-Jeanne enters. Dessalines greets her.)

DESSALINES: Marie-Jeanne, I am Emperor and you are the Empress. *(Marie-Jeanne stands mystified.)*

MARIE-JEANNE: Empress of what?

DESSALINES: Empress of the new state of Haiti. You will wear a crown. Everybody toasts to the Empress. Marie-Jeanne, Empress of Haiti!

ALL: Marie-Jeanne, Empress of Haiti!

(The toast is drunk, Marie-Jeanne still at a loss. There are sounds of: Dessalines Emperor of Haiti! from the crowd outside. Dessalines goes to the window and opens it. He shouts down to them.)

DESSALINES: "Dessalines! Emperor! Haiti!"

(The crowd outside and those in the room are shouting: Dessalines Emperor! Haiti Dessalines! Emperor! Haiti! They break into song. Waving to them, Dessalines suddenly hears the Samedi Smith song. He backs away from the window slowly, then turns around savagely.)

DESSALINES: Where is the music I asked for? *(Two violinists, a flautist and a mandolinist step forward.)* A minuet! And play it loudly! Mr. Cathcart, I am not only a soldier of many campaigns. I am a fine dancer. Marie-Jeanne, allow me. *(Dessalines and Marie-Jeanne make some steps but suddenly the low singing outside stops. It is replaced by a murmur growing into a tumult. Marat enters and whispers news which spreads so rapidly from person to person that the musicians stop playing the minuet. Dessalines falters in the dance.)* What is it? Play on . . .

(Marat steps forward.)

MARAT: Emperor, the news just came. Toussaint is dead. He died in prison.

(Marie-Jeanne moves suddenly to the table and knocks over her glass as she seeks support for her body sagging in grief. There is consternation in the room. From Marie-Jeanne comes a silent flow of tears. The crowd outside have started to sing Samedi Smith's song in the style of a mournful chant. Everybody looks at Dessalines.)

DESSALINES: Toussaint L'Ouverture could have been king of San Domingo, but he would not take it. Moïse told him exactly what to do, but he killed Moïse. I am sorry for him, but we can't do anything about it now. Music there!

(As the minuet hesitantly begins, he steps forward and almost forcibly takes the hand of the weeping Marie-Jeanne to continue the dance. As the lights begin to fade around the periphery of the dance, there is gradual movement off by groups of soldiers. Marat is the last soldier to leave. The musicians then flee as Cathcart remains standing to one side of the dancing and Henri Christophe moves to the right of Dessalines' throne. Marie-Jeanne and Dessalines freeze in a final tableau as the lights fade.)

THE END.