

ACT ONE

4 EXT. SMITH HOUSE - FRONT YARD - BEFORE SUNRISE 4

Phoebe, a speck compared to the grand house, walks out of the door. She fills her arms with firewood, then goes inside.

5 EXT./INT SMITH HOUSE - KITCHEN, OFFICE, ETC. - MONTAGE 5

NOTE: Montage is condensed to accurately reflect its run time. Locations are specified in the action and listed with the other sets on the beginning pages.

Phoebe's hands throw feed for the chickens.

They milk a cow. They pick up the bucket. It's carried to the kitchen. It's placed on the counter.

A match is struck and thrown into the fireplace. The wood catches fire. It blazes to life.

A log is thrown into the roaring flames. Sparks fly. (3x)

Window curtains are thrown open to let in the dim light of the rising sun. (4x)

The milk is poured into a pitcher. Eggs are cracked into a bowl. Dough is kneaded. Set to rise. Sausage is chopped. Thrown in the oven.

6 INT. SMITH HOUSE - KITCHEN - SUNRISE 6

Mrs. Smith comes into the kitchen.

PHOEBE

Madam.

Mrs. Smith smiles at the room.

MRS. SMITH

Beautiful day.

PHOEBE (O.C.)

Yes, madam.

Mrs. Smith collects dishes from the cabinets.

MRS. SMITH

William's spending the day at church, preparing for tomorrow's Sabbath services.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

6

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"The Walls Between Us" S1 E6

6

MRS. SMITH (CONT'D)

Dust and sweep his office--I'll
take Betsy to market today.

PHOEBE (O.C.)

Yes, madam.

Betsy runs in.

BETSY

Good morning!

Betsy kisses her mother on the cheek.

Phoebe's back is to Betsy. She's slicing bread.

PHOEBE

Miss Betsy, why don't you set the
table for your mother.

Betsy takes the dishes from Mrs. Smith. Mrs. Smith pats her
on the head.

MRS. SMITH

Good girl.

Abigail comes in. She pulls the sausage out of the oven and
scrapes it into a nearby bowl. Then, she grabs a serving
spoon and a trivet. She heads towards her dining room.

ABIGAIL

(to Phoebe)

Smells delicious.

Phoebe turns her head towards Abigail; we see her in profile.

PHOEBE

Thank you, Miss Abigail.

Abigail's gone.

7

EXT./INT. SMITH HOUSE - MONTAGE RESUMES

7

A slice of bread is on a plate on the kitchen table. Hands
tear a piece away. The plate is nothing but crumbs. The place
is placed in a pile of other dirty dishes.

A bucket of well water is poured into a bucket.

The dishes are cleaned. The kitchen counters are cleaned.

A rag is swiped across a table. A broom is swiped across the
floor. (5x)

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:
Betsy's in the office doorway.

7

BETSY
Vegetables on the counter!

A vegetable is peeled. A vegetable is chopped. (6x)

8

INT. SMITH HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

8

Abigail busts into the room.

ABIGAIL
It's John's first day under
quarantine.

PHOEBE
He sent a letter?

9

EXT. ADAMS HOMESTEAD - FRONT YARD - DAY

9

10

INT. ADAMS HOMESTEAD - KITCHEN - DAY

10

A doctor talks to Peter. Two nurses attend to things around
the house.

John writes a letter.

JOHN (V.O.)
Dear Nabby, there are people in my
house. And I cannot leave my house
because I'm under house arrest.
This is a problem because I hate
people.

PETER
John! They've gotta give us the
ipecac. Time to get drugged,
vomited, and prodded like a turkey!
Doesn't Mother have the best ideas?

JOHN (V.O.)
Pray for me. Ever yours, John.

11

INT. SMITH HOUSE - KITCHEN - THE SAME

11

ABIGAIL
I told him to suck it up. He hates
people too much.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

PHOEBE

You sound less worried than before.

ABIGAIL

I spoke to Uncle Tufts; he told me how unlikely it is that John's gonna get sick. I miss him, but it's a small sacrifice.

Phoebe smiles.

PHOEBE

Very wise, Miss Abigail.

Abigail practically skips out of the room.

12 EXT./INT SMITH HOUSE - MONTAGE RESUMES

12

More well water is poured into the bucket.

A rag swipes a window. An article of clothing gets swiped on the washboard. A wet article of clothing is thrown on the clothes line. A dry article of clothing is placed in a closet. (3x)

The previously chopped vegetables are poured into a pot one by one. Water is added. The pot is hung over the oven.

A match is struck. (7x)

A candle is lit. (3x)

13 INT. SMITH HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

13

Revered Smith, Mrs. Smith, Betsy, Abigail, Mary, and Richard sit together, eating stew.

REV. SMITH

Bring Elizabeth to service tomorrow.

MARY

She might make noise, Father.

REV. SMITH

The sooner she's exposed, the sooner she'll sit through services.

MARY

But not as a baby!

(CONTINUED)

13

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13

RICHARD

If she gets fussy, we'll take her out.

Rev. Smith raises his glass to Richard.

REV. SMITH

There's a smart man.

Phoebe takes away the empty pot of stew.

MRS. SMITH

You're excused, girls.

Betsy and Abigail bolt from the table.

14

EXT./INT SMITH HOUSE - MONTAGE RESUMES

14

Chamber pots are emptied. (7x)

The bucket of water is refilled at the well. Chamber pots are scrubbed.

Water is thrown over the fireplace, putting out the fire.
(3x)

The fireplace is scrubbed.

A candle is blown out. (5x)

15

INT. SMITH HOUSE - SERVANT'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

15

Phoebe carries a candle into the room. She notices the second bed is empty, but is too tired to wonder. The third bed is occupied with a sleeping figure, but we can't quite make them out.

Phoebe places the candle on the ground next to her and falls into her bed.

Tom, also carrying a candle, knocks on the open doorway. Phoebe jumps.

TOM

Sweet dreams, Miss Phoebe?

Phoebe hits him over the head.

PHOEBE

You scared the life out of me!
You're never up past midnight.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

TOM

I met Amelia by the river. Never
too tired for her.

He pulls some salted meat out of his pocket and holds half
out to Phoebe.

TOM (CONT'D)

Her mistress told her to feed them
to the pigs, but she saved some for
me.

Phoebe chuckles and takes some.

TOM (CONT'D)

No thank you?

PHOEBE

Thank you, Jesus, for Tom's
appetite for women. And for making
him sterile, 'cause otherwise he'd
have ten children by now.

TOM

Shoot me, why don't you?

Phoebe notices some holes in Tom's shirt.

PHOEBE

I think you did a good job shooting
yourself. Take your shirt off.

TOM

Now, Miss Phoebe, I'm not the kind
to have two women at once.

PHOEBE

Get that shirt off before I change
my mind. You'll get sick the second
it rains.

He takes off his shirt and throws it to Phoebe. She takes
some sewing needles and thread out from under the bed and
works on the holes in the candlelight.

TOM

Master Smith and Mr. Cranch were
talking about you.

PHOEBE

You shouldn't listen, Tom.

TOM

You're one to talk.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

PHOEBE
I'm good at it.

TOM
I was planting seeds right next to them!

PHOEBE
So, what's the story you're dying to tell?

TOM
Master Smith said you're in Miss Abigail's dowry.

Phoebe stops sewing. Her reaction is guarded, but conflicted.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm happy for you.

PHOEBE
I didn't do anything.

Tom leans on the foot of Phoebe's bed, so he can look her straight in the eye.

TOM
You're gonna be Mr. Adams' slave. Which means you won't be a slave for long.

Phoebe's eyes go back to her work. She sews again, ferociously.

PHOEBE
What makes you say that?

TOM
The man's an abolitionist.

PHOEBE
Unless he buys me from Master Smith, I'm not his. He's borrowing me.

TOM
Miss Abigail loves you and Mr. Adams is an abolitionist. You'll be treated better. And they'll wear Master Smith down.

PHOEBE
Miss Abigail's had nineteen years to ask for our freedom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED:

"The Walls Between Us" S1 E6

15

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

Either it didn't work, or she isn't planning to ask.

TOM

You've got a chance at a better life, Miss Phoebe. Be happy.

Phoebe hands him his shirt. He tries it on, admiring himself in the window's reflection.

PHOEBE

That's all it is. A chance. I try not to hope much. Hope's a gamble, and I can't afford to lose.

Tom settles into his bed.

TOM

I'll gamble for you, then. Goodnight, Miss Phoebe.

PHOEBE

Goodnight, Mr. Tom.

Phoebe climbs into bed, still in her day clothes. Her eyes close as soon as her head hits the pillow.

END OF ACT ONE

23 CONTINUED:

25 EXT. SMITH HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY 25

26 EXT. SMITH HOUSE - STABLES - STALL #1 - DAY 26

Phoebe's refilling the horse's water trough.

The horse bobs its head. Its bit hits Phoebe right on the forehead. Her eyes narrow. She stands up and looks the horse right in the eye.

CLOSE UP OF THE HORSE'S EYES

CLOSE UP OF PHOEBE'S EYES

Old West music plays as though the two are about to duel.

A voice comes from the next stall.

TOM (O.C.)
Miss Phoebe!

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

PHOEBE
(to the horse)
This isn't over.

27

EXT. SMITH HOUSE - STABLES - STALL #2 - MOMENTS LATER

27

Tom ties another horse's reins to the pole. Phoebe walks in.

PHOEBE
Yeah what's--

She notices the horse.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)
No. No. They did not get another
one. Take that menace away--

TOM
Relax. It's Mr. Adams' horse. Miss
Abigail offered to take care of it
while he's in quarantine.

PHOEBE
She's taking care of it, then.
Those animals have it out for me.

Tom's finished tying the rein.

TOM
I fed it before I brought it here.
You're off the hook.

PHOEBE
You're a good man, Mr. Tom.

The two of them leave. Tom heads out first. Before Phoebe follows, she glances over her shoulder at John's horse.

Old west music plays again.

28

EXT. SMITH HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

28

Phoebe and Tom walk to the house. Abigail comes running out. She stops in front of Phoebe, breathless. Tom and Phoebe automatically look down to avoid looking her in the eye.

ABIGAIL
Did the mail come yet?

Phoebe smiles kindly. She's allowed to look at Abigail now.

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28

CONTINUED:

28

PHOEBE
Yes, Miss Abigail.

ABIGAIL
I'll get it!

Abigail races off.

TOM
Ah, young love.

PHOEBE
You remember being a teenager.
Everything in extremes.

TOM
I'd say that's love in a nutshell.

PHOEBE
I'll have to take your word for it.

Tom raises his eyebrows.

TOM
You've never been in love?

Phoebe just smiles. There's a lot of pain behind it.

43 CONTINUED:

43

44 INT. SMITH HOUSE - SLAVE'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

44

It's the same as before: one figure asleep in their bed, Phoebe sitting on her bed, sewing a patch onto an apron. She's smiling and humming.

Tom enters.

TOM

What's got you in a good mood, Miss Phoebe.

PHOEBE

Mr. Adams and Miss Abigail set a date.

TOM

I thought you don't listen?

Phoebe laughs.

PHOEBE

I try not to, Mr. Tom. Try not to listen, try not to hope.

She puts down her apron and looks up at Tom. There's an unmistakable fire in her eyes.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

But I am human.

END OF ACT THREE