

HELEN

So now you believe?

TIMA

I was just playing along with you at first. Then I was just enjoying the chance to play. And somewhere along the line - - -

HELEN

Probably over the anointed German Chocolate Cake of Miss Cliffie.

TIMA

Probably then. Along with telling you about the baby. Suddenly, it all felt right and made sense.

HELEN

Septima, this is your day, and this night is yours to find the almost 300-year-old resting spot of your ancestors and come into your power.

TIMA

I haven't heard my whole name in a long time. I looked it up once. Now it all makes sense. Latin for seventh.

Start here

HELEN

That was my influence. Ok. Let me tell you about this place. We didn't come to Maryland by chance. The cemetery is near what was called the Hill community.

(CARETAKER appears wearing a long dark cloak, face shrouded and holding a lighted lantern.)

CARETAKER

Frederick Douglass was born near here.

(TIMA and HELEN screech and clutch each other.)

Ladies, sorry if I scared you. I'm the cemetery's caretaker, merely doing my rounds. I overheard you talking about this area's history and couldn't resist shedding some light.

HELEN

You're shedding light alright. Now that I can breathe again, could you tell my granddaughter here more about this area?

CARETAKER

Of course. Here in Easton, Maryland, this area was known as The Hill. It was a historic free Black community, dating back to 1788. One of the oldest settlements for free Black men and women. It existed 80 years before the Civil War ended. Frederick Douglass was born enslaved not far from here, but came back as a free man in 1878 and gave a speech at the Talbot County Courthouse. It was glorious.

TIMA

You say it as if you were there and witnessed it yourself.

(A beat.)

CARETAKER

(Pointing with a gloved hand)

The grave you seek is seven stones over from that towering willow oak tree.

(CARETAKER turns and exits. TIMA stands.)

Stop

TIMA

(To the departing back) Goodbye. And thank you! (To HELEN) I can't imagine how hot it must be wearing that heavy cloak and gloves in July. Grandma. Grandma, are you ok?

HELEN

I...I...just remembered....I met that person before. They were here when I was with my grandmother doing this.

TIMA

It can't be the same person.

HELEN

Because my granny was the only one I could talk about this with...it's all flooding back to me. (Looking at her watch.) Tima, honey, you have only 15... 14 minutes before your birthday is over. Go!