THE HELP

by Tate Taylor

Based on the novel THE HELP

By

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DreamWorks
INT. LEEFOLT HOME - MAE MOBLEY'S ROOM - SAME DAY

1. ELIZABETH
   Aibileen, **bridge club's in an hour**!
   Did you finish the chicken salad?
2. AIBILEEN
   Yes, ma'am.
3. ELIZABETH
   **Oh, and Hilly's deviled eggs. No paprika!**
   Does this dress look homemade?
4. AIBILEEN
   I reckon when you finish, it won't.

INT. JACKSON JOURNAL NEWSPAPER - OFFICE - SAME DAY

INT. MR. BLACKLY'S OFFICE

1. MR. BLACKLY
   Oh, Christ, I guess you'll do. **Can you clean?**
2. SKEETER
   I'm sorry. Clean?
3. MR. BLACKLY
   Clean!

INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - BATHROOM - SAME DAY

1. HILLY
   (screaming upward)
   Momma! **We're late for bridge**!
   Minny! Go get Momma!

INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - ENTRY FOYER STAIRWELL - SAME TIME

1. MINNY
   Missus Walters?! **You need help coming down?**
2. MISSUS WALTERS
   I'm down. Been down.
3. MINNY
   Gone give me a heart attack!
   Whoa, whoa, whoa, Missus Walters. Here, let me help you. Let's take
that coat off. **It's ninety-eight degrees out there.**

4. MISSUS WALTERS  
   Oh, is it?

5. MINNY  
   Yes, ma'am.

6. MISSUS WALTERS  
   Well, let's put my coat on then.  
   Thank you.

INT. LEEFOLT HOME - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aibileen kneels next to Mae Mobley, who sits on a small children's training toilet.

1. MAE MOBLEY  
   No!

2. AIBLEEN  
   **You drunk up two glasses of grape juice. I know you got to tee-tee.**

3. MAE MOBLEY  
   No.

4. AIBLEEN  
   I'll give you two cookies if you go.  
   (Mae Mobley forms a smile as tee-tee sprinkles into the bowl)

5. ELIZABETH  
   **Aibileen, the girls are pulling up, and the table isn't set!**

6. MAE MOBLEY  
   Mae Mobley go, Momma!

7. ELIZABETH  
   (to Aibileen)  
   Set out the dessert forks, please.  
   (Elizabeth storms off with Mae Mobley. Aibileen is clearly disappointed)

EXT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

1. SKEETER  
   Hi, Missus Walters.  
   (Missus Walters stays glued to the TV)

2. MISSUS WALTERS  
   (dismissive)  
   **I'm watching my story.**
Okay.

INT. LEEFOLT HOME - DEN - DAY

1. SKEETER
I got a job today! At The Jackson Journal!
2. HILLY
They'd be a fool not to hire you.
3. SKEETER
Elizabeth, do you mind if I talk to Aibileen? Just to help me answer the letters 'til I get a knack for it.
4. ELIZABETH
My Aibileen? Why can't you just get Constantine to help?
5. SKEETER
Constantine quit us.
Anyway, I just, um, I don't know how to answer these letters.
(Elizabeth looks to Aibileen)
6. ELIZABETH
Well, I mean as long as it doesn't interfere with her work. I don't see why not.

EXT. FOOTE ESTATE (INTERCUT) - POOL - SAME TIME

1. CELIA FOOTE (O.C.)
Hello, is Elizabeth in?
2. AIBLEEN
She havin' bridge club right now.
May I take a message?
3. CELIA
Uh, yes, please tell her Celia Foote called again. I'll call back tomorrow.
4. AIBLEEN
Yes, ma'am.
5. JOHNNY
What's for lunch?
6. CELIA
You scared the daylights out of me!
7. JOHNHY
Mm. It's lunchtime and I'm suddenly
hungry.

8. CELIA
(laughing)
Johnny! Honestly!

INT. LEEFOLT HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

1. MISSUS WALTERS
Oh! I'm still workin' on it,
Aibileen.

2. ELIZABETH
(to Aibileen)
Who was that on the phone?

3. AIBLEEN
Miss Celia Foote called again.
(Elizabeth stiffens then leans over and touches Hilly's arm)

4. ELIZABETH
I've never called her back, Hilly.

5. HILLY
She can't take a hint, can she?

6. JOLENE
Who's Celia Foote?

7. HILLY
That tacky girl Johnny married.
From Sugar Ditch!

8. SKEETEER
It could have been you, Hilly.

9. HILLY
And live thirty minutes outside of
town? No, thank you. Anyway, I ran
into her at the beauty parlor and
she had the nerve to ask if she
could help with the Children's
Benefit Ball.

10. SKEETEER
Well, aren't we taking non-members?
The benefit's gotten so big.

11. HILLY
Yes, but we're not telling her.
(Everyone laughs but Skeeter. Aibileen begins refilling glasses of tea.)
Skeeter is the only one to acknowledge this)

12. SKEETER
Thank you, Aibileen.

(Hilly begins squirming in her seat, obviously making a point to Elizabeth)

13. ELIZABETH
Oh, Hilly, I wish you'd just go use the bathroom.

14. HILLY
I'm fine.

(Missus Walters breaks the uncomfortable silence as she shouts out from the sofa)

15. MISSUS WALTERS
Oh, she's just upset cause the nigra uses the guest bath, and so do we.

(Elizabeth quickly turns to Aibileen)

16. ELIZABETH
Aibileen, go check on Mae Mobley.

(Aibileen disappears. Elizabeth leans into Hilly)

17. HILLY
Just go use mine and Raleigh's.

18. ELIZABETH
(quickly)
SHE DOES NOT!

Aibileen returns down the hall from Mae Mobley's room. She and Skeeter catch eyes. Aibileen ducks behind a corner in the hall so she can listen to the girls' conversation.

19. HILLY
Wouldn't you rather them take their business outside?

(Skeeter tries to change the subject)

20. SKEETER
Have y'all seen the cover of Life this week? Jackie's never looked more regal-

21. HILLY
Tell Raleigh every penny he spends on a colored's bathroom, he'll get back in spades when y'all sell. It's just plain dangerous. They carry different diseases than we do.

22. ELIZABETH
(re: her cards)

   Pass.

23. HILLY

That's why I've drafted The Home Health Sanitation Initiative.

24. SKEETER

The what?

(Aibileen continues listening in the hallway)

25. HILLY

A disease preventative bill that requires every white home to have a separate bathroom for the colored help. It's been endorsed by the White Citizen's Council.

26. SKEETER

Maybe we ought to just build you a bathroom outside, Hilly.

(The room grows eerily quiet)

27. HILLY

You ought not to joke about the colored situation. I'll do whatever it takes to protect our children. Your lead, Elizabeth.

INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

1. SKEETER

Aibileen?

(Aibileen becomes nervous at the sight of Skeeter alone)

2. AIBILEEN

Yes, ma'am.

3. SKEETER

Do you think you'd be willing to help me with those "Miss Myrna" letters?

4. AIBILEEN

Miss Myrna get it wrong a lot of times. Be good to get it right.

5. SKEETER

Thank you, Aibileen. All that talk in there today... Hilly's talk? I'm sorry you had to hear that.

6. ELIZABETH

Well, there you are, Skeeter.

(Elizabeth hands Skeeter the papers. Home Health Sanitation Initiative is written on the cover)

Hilly wants you to put her
initiative in the league newsletter.
(Skeeter nods and turns to Aibileen)

INT. PHELAN HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

1. CARLTON
What the hell do you know about cleanin' a house, Skeeter?
(Skeeter snaps to attention)
2. SKEETER
Well, it's a start, Carlton.
3. CARLTON
If you say so. I thought you wanted to write books.
4. ROBERT
Now y'all leave your sister alone. I'm proud of you, sweetheart.
(Charlotte scoops up some broth with a spoon)
5. CHARLOTTE
Oh, the irony of it all. Givin' advice on keepin' up a home when she
doesn't even-
(Charlotte's spoon goes in her mouth. Pascagoula approaches
Skeeter and sets down a plate of food. Skeeter stops her)
6. SKEETER
Oh! No, Pascagoula! You couldn't have known this...But, I'm allergic
to almonds.
7. PASCAGOULA
Sorry, Miss Eugenia. I'll get you another one.

EXT. PHELAN HOME (FLASHBACK) - WILLOW TREE - EARLY EVENING

Skeeter, 15 and lanky, sits on the same bench under the
willow tree. Despite a tight bun, her strong-willed hair has
started to frizz.
Constantine approaches the willow tree. Her skin is black as
night. Her eyes have a striking honey-colored hue. She sits next to Skeeter.

1. CONSTANTINE
What you doin' hidin' out here, Girl?
2. SKEETER
I just couldn't tell momma I didn't get asked to the dance.
3. CONSTANTINE
It's all right. Some things we just got to keep to ourselves, right?
4. SKEETER
All the boys say I'm ugly. Momma was third runner up in the Miss
5. CONSTANTINE

*I wish you would quit feeling sorry for yourself.* Now, that's ugly. Ugly is something that grows up inside you. It's mean and hurtful, like them boys. Now you're not one of them, is you?

(Skeeter shakes her head)

Well, I didn't think so, honey. Every day.... Every day you're not dead in the ground, when you wake up in the morning, you gonna have to make some decisions. Got to ask yourself, am I gone believe all them bad things them fools say about me today? You hear me? Am I going to believe all of them bad things them fools say about me today? All right. Come on. Go home with me till the dance over. Come on.

EXT. PHELAN HOME -FRONT YARD - WILLOW TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Skeeter looks toward the same dirt path. An idea washes over her. She forms a big smile.

INT. PHELAN HOME - PANTRY - SAME TIME

1. CHARLOTTE (O.C.)
Skeeter, who are you talking to in there?

(Skeeter covers the mouth piece and opens the door)

2. SKEETER
Go! Away!

(Skeeter slams the door)

3. MISS STEIN
Who was that?

4. SKEETER
My mother.

5. MISS STEIN

**Look, no maid in her right mind is ever gonna tell you the truth.** That's a hell of a risk to take in a place like Jackson, Mississippi.

6. SKEETER
I already have a maid.

7. MISS STEIN
Really? A Negro maid has already agreed to speak with you?

8. SKEETER
   Yes, ma’am.

9. MISS STEIN
Well...I guess I can read what you come up with. The book biz could use a little rattling.

10. SKEETER
    Thank you, Miss Stein!

EXT. LEEFOLT HOME - BACK YARD - LATER THAT DAY

1. SKEETER
"Dear Miss Myrna, When I’m chopping onions, how do I keep tears out of my eyes?"

2. AIBILEEN
   Shoot, that’s easy. You tell her hold a matchstick between her teeth.
   (Skeeter writes this down)

3. SKEETER
   Is it lit?
   (Aibileen smiles and shakes her head)

4. AIBILEEN
   No, ma’am.

5. HILLY (O.S.)
   Miss Leefolt said you could start right away. Build it just...

6. HILLY
   like the bathroom at my house. Let’s see.
   (A CONTRACTOR, 30’s, follows holding a set of plans)
   Right there. That will be nice.

7. CONTRACTOR
   Yes, ma’am.

   (Thunder cracks. Trees sway wildly in the wind as a storm approaches. Rain begins to fall)

8. HILLY
   Oh, my goodness, we got to run back to the car.
   Come on, Billy. Bye, Skeeter!
   (Aibileen and Skeeter watch as Hilly runs back to her car.
   Skeeter turns to Aibileen, seizing the moment)

9. SKEETER
   Aibileen. There’s somethin’ else I want to write about...But I need your help. I want to interview you...about what it is like to work as a maid. I’d like to do a book of interviews about working for white families...
INT. LEEFOLT HOME (INTERCUT) - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

1. RALEIGH
I bought you this damn house, put up with the new clothes and the trips to New Orleans, but this takes the goddamn cake!

2. ELIZABETH
Hilly spoke to the surgeon general. She also said it will add value to our home!

3. RALEIGH (O.C.)
I guess Mae Mobley will just have to go to college in that damn bathroom!

INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Raleigh storms in the kitchen with Elizabeth on his heels.

1. ELIZABETH
Hilly's covering the cost and said you can just do William's taxes to pay her back.

2. RALEIGH
We don't take orders from the Holbrooks!

(Raleigh and Elizabeth are surprised to see Skeeter)

Skeeter? How you doin'?

3. SKEETER
Fine.

Mae Mobley begins crying in her bedroom.

4. RALEIGH
Fix me a sandwich, Aibileen.

5. ELIZABETH
Aibileen, Mae Mobley’s cryin' her eyes out!

(Aibileen runs off. Elizabeth tries to compose herself)

6. ELIZABETH
Skeeter...I'm sorry but I think it's best if you leave now.

7. SKEETER
Oh! Sure, sure.

EXT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - LATER AFTERNOON

1. MISSUS WALTERS
Are we in Biloxi, Minny?

2. MINNY
No, Ma'am, we ain't.
(Minny lowers Missus Walters into a dining table chair)

3. MINNY

Why don't you sit down here for a spell. And then me and you, we'll go down to the beach in a little while. How 'bout that?

Hilly plops down in a dining table chair and fans herself. Missus Walters notices as Minny looks out to the garage bathroom. A patio chair is blown against its door.

Minny suddenly begins squirming with discomfort. Minny hesitates. Minny turns to Hilly and gulps.

MINNY

Uh...Miss Hilly?

4. HILLY

Mm-hm?

5. MINNY

Never mind.

(As Minny turns back to the window, Missus Walters calls out to her)

6. MISSUS WALTERS

You go on ahead and use the inside bath, Minny. It's all right.

EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

1. YULE MAY

Is that Minny?

2. AIBLEEN

Minny?

(Minny turns with a guilty smile as passengers board behind)

3. MINNY

Hey, Aibileen.

4. YULE MAY

Hi, Minny.

(Minny ignores Yule May)

5. MINNY

Uh-hm.

6. AIBLEEN

Where you headed?

7. MINNY

I got some business ta tend to. So, y'all just mind your own!

(With that, Minny storms off. Yule May and Aibileen look suspiciously at one another)

8. YULE MAY

All right, then. Well, Bye!
(Minnie briefly throws her hand in the air, never turning)

9. MINNY
Bye!

10. YULE MAY
Now, she's mad at me 'cause I got that job at Miss Hilly's.

11. Aibileen
Don't worry about her. She's always mad about something.

Yule May's eyes suddenly widen as she indicates someone approaching.
Aibileen turns to find Skeeter walking toward them. She and Aibileen catch eyes. Skeeter waves.

12. SKEETER
Aibileen!

(Aibileen nods nervously, looking at the other domestics)

13. Aibileen
Yes, ma'am. Everything okay.

14. SKEETER
Oh, yeah, I just wanted to talk to you.
(Yule May looks to Aibileen with concern)

15. Aibileen
You got some more "Miss Myrna" questions for me?

16. SKEETER
Oh no. I just wanted to talk about… We never finished our conversation at Elizabeth's. About the book I want to write.

17. Aibileen
Yes, ma'am.

(Aibileen watches regretfully as the bus pulls away)

18. SKEETER
I'd really like to interview you, Aibileen. I know it's scary.
(Aibileen slowly turns)

19. Aibileen
They set my cousin Shinelle's car on fire just cause she went down to the voting station.

20. SKEETER
A book like this has never been written before.

21. Aibileen
'Cause they's a reason. I do this with you, I might as well burn my own house down.

22. SKEETER
I promise we'll be careful.
23. Aibileen
This already ain't careful, Miss Skeeter! You not knowing that is what scare me the most. Scare me more than "Jim Crow".

24. Skeeter

Here's my phone number.
(Aibileen quickly grabs the paper and shoves it in her pocket)

And my car's here. I could take you home.

25. Aibileen

No, Ma'am.

INT. AIBLEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DUSK

There is a knock at the kitchen door. Aibileen quickly opens it and waves Skeeter inside.

1. Aibileen
Quick. Come in quick.

2. Skeeter

I parked way up on State Street and caught a cab here like you asked.

3. Aibileen
Got dropped two streets over?

4. Skeeter

I know now that it's against the law what we're doin'. I've never seen you out of uniform before. You look really nice.

5. Aibileen
Thank you. I ain't never had no white person in my house before. Miss Skeeter, what if you don't like what I got to say? About white peoples?

6. Skeeter

This isn't about me. It doesn't matter how I feel.

7. Aibileen

You gone have to change my name. Mine, Miss Leefolt's, everybody's.

8. Skeeter

Do you have other maids interested?

(Aibileen is quiet for a moment. She shakes her head)

9. Aibileen
That gone be hard.

10. Skeeter

What about Minny?

11. Aibileen

Nah, Minny got her some stories, sho nuff. But she ain't real keen on talking to white peoples right now.
INT. Aibileen's House - Kitchen - Moments Later

We continue with the interview that began in scene one. Skeeter sits at the kitchen table taking notes.

1. SKEETER

What does it feel like to raise a white child when your own child's at home, being looked after by somebody else?

2. Aibileen

It feel...Uh.

3. SKEETER

Is that your son?

4. Aibileen

Yes, ma'am. Can we move on to the next question?

5. SKEETER

You know, Aibileen, you don't have to call me "ma'am." Not here.

(Aibileen nods. Skeeter stares at her list of questions)

INT. Holbrook House - Dining Room – Day

Hilly reads the newspaper at the breakfast table, her hair set in pin curls. Her husband William, dressed for work, also reads the paper. Yule May clears breakfast dishes. She starts to leave but stops herself. With something to say, she sets a plate down on the table and wrings her hands nervously.

1. YULE MAY

Miss Hilly, I would like to ask you and Mr. William something. My twin boys graduated high school, both on the honor roll...Well, me and my husband, we been saving for years to send them to Tougaloo. We short about seventy-five dollars on one of the tuitions.

(William conspicuously checks the time on his wristwatch and quickly stands)

2. WILLIAM

Whoo! I am late. I gotta get goin'.

See you tonight, honey.

3. HILLY

Okay.

(to Yule May)

Go on.

4. YULE MAY

Well, now...We're faced with having to choose. Which son can go...if we don't find all the money.
 Would you consider givin' us a loan? I'll...I'll work everyday for free 'til it was paid off.  
5. HILLY  
That's not working for free, Yule May. That's paying off a debt.  
6. YULE MAY  
Yes, ma'am.  
7. HILLY  
As a Christian, I'm doin' you a favor. God doesn't give charity to those who are well and able. You need to come up with this money on your own. 'Kay?  
8. YULE MAY  
Yes, Ma'am.  
(Hilly raises the paper up to her face to resume reading)  
9. HILLY  
You'll thank me one day.  

EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - LATER  

1. CELIA  
Hi! Hey! Come on!  
2. MINNY  
(under her breath)  
No sass-mouthin', Minny Jackson, no sass mouthin'...  

(Celia Foote brings Minny inside. Celia is covered in tight pink clothes. Celia sits down on a chair and begins to put on her shoes. There's a smudge of flour on her cheek)  
3. CELIA  
Aibileen said you'd be on time. I'm Celia Rae Foote.  
4. MINNY  
I'm Minny Jackson.  
(indicating flour)  
**You cookin' somethin'?**  
(Celia wipes flour from her cheek)  
5. CELIA  
One of those upside-down cakes from the magazine. It ain't workin' out too good.  
(Celia jumps up and grabs Minny's arm. Minny follows her to the kitchen)  

INT. FOOTE ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER  

Celia and Minny enter the living room. Celia crosses the room toward the kitchen.
1. CELIA
   You hungry?
2 MINNY
   No, ma'am. Now hold on a minute. We gots to talk about some things
   First.
3. CELIA
   Oh.
4. MINNY
   I work Sunday through Friday.

5. CELIA
   No, you can't work at all on
   weekends.
6. MINNY
   Okay. Well, what time you want me here?
7. CELIA
   After nine, and you gotta leave before four.
8. MINNY
   Okay. Now what your husband say you can pay?
   (Celia looks away)
9. CELIA
   Johnny doesn't know I'm bringing in help.
10. MINNY
    And what's Mr. Johnny gone do when he come home and finds a colored
        woman in his house?
11. CELIA
    It's not like I'd be fibbing. I just want him to think I can do this on
        my own... I really need a maid.
    (Minny lets out a big breath)
12. MINNY
    I'll be here tomorrow mornin' 'bout nine-fifteen.

INT. BRENT'S PHARMACY AND SODA FOUNTAIN - LATER THAT DAY

1. SKEETER
   Sorry I'm late.
   (Hilly shakes her head with little emotion. Elizabeth slides
    a coke float in front of Skeeter)
   Thanks.
   (Skeeter slowly looks to Hilly)
Hilly, I really am sorry about the newsletter. It's just with Momma being sick and all.

2. HILLY
Oh, it's fine.

(A waiter, HENRY, black, early 30s, approaches the table)

3. HENRY
I made you an egg and olive on rye, Miss Skeeter.

(Skeeter smiles)

4. SKEETER
Oh, thank you, Henry. You remembered.

5. HENRY
You're welcome.

INT. Aibileen's House - Kitchen - Sunrise

1. MINNY
We gots to get more maids!

(Minny stands. Skeeter's eyes widen with hope)

2. Aibileen
It hard. **You go try and see.**

3. MINNY
Okay, I will.

4. Aibileen
We gone and done it now.

(Minny barges through the kitchen door)

5. MINNY
They done set off a bomb in MedgarEvers' carport.

Minny stops cold in her tracks at the sight of Skeeter. Her face hardens. She turns to Aibileen.

MINNY (V.O.)
Yule May told me what y'all was up to. I didn't wanna believe it.

(Aibileen looks to the floor. Minny scowls at Skeeter)

6. MINNY
And just what makes you think colored people need your help? Why do you care?

7. Aibileen
Minny.

8. MINNY
(to Skeeter)
Maybe you just want to get Aibileen in trouble.

(More sirens are heard coming from other directions. Skeeter is petrified. Her face reddens)

9. SKEETER
   No. I want to show her perspective...so people might understand what it's like from yours side.

10. MINNY
   Well it's a real Fourth of July picnic. It's what we dream a doing all weekend long, get back in they house to polish the silver. And we just love not makin' minimum wage or gettin' Social Security.

(Minny makes a point to make eye contact with Aibileen)

11. MINNY
   And how we love they children when they little and then they turn out just like they mommas.

12. SKEETER
   I know. So maybe things can change.

13. MINNY
   What law's gonna say you gotta be nice to your maid?

14. AIBLEEN
   **You don't have to do this, Minny.**

15. MINNY
   You damn right I don't! You two givin' me the heart palpitations.

INT. PHELAN HOME - SKEETER'S BEDROOM - LATER

The Shinolator was a success. Skeeter's hair is straight, silky and beautiful. Skeeter gazes into the mirror.

1. SKEETER
   Holy shit.

2. CHARLOTTE
   You've shrunk five inches. You'll be able to wear heels tonight.

3. SKEETER
   Oh my God.

(Charlotte looks down to the huarache shoes on Skeeter's feet and begins forcibly removing them)

4. CHARLOTTE
   You're not leaving this house in those awful, Mexican man-shoes.

5. SKEETER
   **Can I take the Cadillac?**

6. CHARLOTTE
We promised the Cadillac to Carlton and Rebecca tonight. So William's cousin will just have to come pick you up himself.

INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Hilly, William, Stuart and Skeeter sit at a round table adorned with white linens, silver and fine china. The room buzzes with Jackson's elite, all trying to be noticed. A Frankie Avalon tune plays in the background. Stuart finishes the drink he's holding and motions to a waiter for another.

1. STUART
   (to Skeeter)
   **You want a drink?**
2. SKEETER
   Just water, please.
3. STUART
   (to waiter)
   Double Old Kentucky straight...with a water back...Make that two backs.
4. SKEETER
   You sure you don't want to just make it the whole bottle and a straw?

INT. FOOTE ESTATE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

Minny sits alone at a table for two by a window. She unfolds her napkin and places it over her lap. Just as she's about to bite into a crispy chicken wing, Celia enters from the dining room with her plate.

1. CELIA
   There you are.
   (She sits at Minny's table)
   I'm starved. It looks so good!
2. MINNY
   We done been over this, Miss Celia. **You supposed to eat in the dinin' room. That how it work.**
   (Minny grabs Celia's plat)
   Here, let me take your plate back-
3. CELIA
   No! I'm fine right here, Minny.
4. MINNY
   What?
5. CELIA
I just want you to know...I'm real grateful you're here.

6. MINNY
You gots plenty more to be grateful for than me. And look, now I ain't messin' around no more. Mister Johnny gone catch me here and shoot me dead right here on this no-wax floor! You gots to tell him. Ain't he wondering how the cookin's so good?

7. CELIA FOOTE
You're right. Maybe we ought to burn the chicken a little.

(Minny lowers her piece of chicken and looks directly into Celia's eyes)

8. MINNY
Minny don't burn chicken.

INT. AIBILEEN'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Skeeter hangs up the phone and sits down at the kitchen table with Minny and Aibileen.

1. SKEETER
We need a dozen more.

2. MINNY
Me and Aibileen done asked everybody we know. Thirty-one maids. They all too scared, think we crazy.

3. SKEETER
Well if we don't get more, we're not getting published.

4. MINNY
I gots plenty a stories, Miss Skeeter. Just write 'em down and invent the maid that said it. You're already making up names. Just make up the maids, too.

5. SKEETER
We're not gonna do that. That would be wrong.

6. AIBILEEN
Don't give up on this, Miss Skeeter.

EXT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER THAT DAY

Mae Mobley wanders up to the table and approaches Elizabeth.
Her belly almost looks distended crammed inside last year's one piece.

1. MAE MOBLEY
I'm hungry, Momma.

(Elizabeth turns to Mae Mobley but never gets up)

2. ELIZABETH
She's always hungry.
(All the women laugh except for Skeeter. Skeeter scowls)

3. SKEETER
   You know she can hear you, Elizabeth?
   (Elizabeth lowers her iced tea and looks away. Aibileen kneels down to Mae Mobley)

4. AIBILEEN
   I'll cut you a piece of cake, Baby.

INT. HOLBROOK HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

1. HILLY
   Skeeter, are you intentionally not putting my initiative in the newsletter?

2. SKEETER
   No, no, not at all. I've just been really busy with Momma.

3. HILLY
   I know. I know, you must be so worried about your mother, but, um...
   (Hilly reveals that she's been holding the pamphlet of Mississippi race laws that were in Skeeter's satchel)
   ...I'm worried about you. Readin' this stuff? Believe it or not, there are real racists in this town!
   If the wrong person caught you with anything like that you'd be in serious trouble.
   (Skeeter snatches the booklet from Hilly)

4. SKEETER
   Well, I'll be on the lookout.

5. HILLY
   Put my initiative in the newsletter. 'Kay?

EXT. PHELAN HOME - BACK YARD - WILLOW TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Skeeter and Stuart sit on the bench beneath the willow tree.

1. STUART
   Look. I know it was a few weeks back, but I came here to say I'm sorry for the way I acted.

2. SKEETER
   Who sent you? William or Hilly?

3. STUART
   Neither.
   (Skeeter shoots Stuart a look)
4. STUART
Okay, Hilly. But, I wanted to come. I was rude, and I've been thinking about it a lot.

5. SKEETER
Well, I haven't. **So you can just go.**

6. STUART
Goddammit!
(He stands and fixes his tie)
I told Hilly I wasn't ready to go out on any date, all right? Wasn't even close to ready.

(Stuart shoves his hands in his pockets like a boy. Skeeter turns to the balcony and sees her mother pretending to prune a plant)

**STUART**
I was engaged last year. She ended it.

7. SKEETER
I'm sure she did.

8. STUART
It's not like that. I'm not always a jerk. Anyway, we'd been dating since we were fifteen. You know how it is.

9. SKEETER
Actually, I don't. I've never really dated anyone before.

10. STUART
Ever?

11. SKEETER
Ever.
(Stuart chuckles)

12. STUART
Well, that must be it then.

13. SKEETER
What?!

14. STUART
Skeeter, I've never met a woman that says exactly what she's thinking.

15. SKEETER
Well, I've got plenty to say.

16. STUART
Yeah, I'll bet you do. You make me laugh...and smile. Would you a....**would you like to come have dinner with me? We could talk. I could actually listen to you this time.**

17. SKEETER
I can't think of anything worse.
(Stuart looks down)
18. STUART
Well, I understand and I'm sorry. That's what I came to say and...I said it.

Stuart turns and walks towards his car, self-consciously weaving his strong fingers through his hair. Skeeter looks up to the Charlotte-free balcony and shouts out to Stuart.

19. SKEETER
Just give me a minute!
(Stuart turns)
Let me get my sweater.

EXT. MAYFLOWER CAFE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stuart follows Skeeter out of the restaurant. He suddenly stops her and spins her around.

1. STUART
Skeeter, I hope you get to write something really good. Something you believe in.
(Stuart and Skeeter kiss under the cafe's flashing neon sign)

EXT. JACKSON STREET - MINUTES LATER

Aibileen and Henry walk along a dark street. The sound of cicadas and sirens fill the air. Over a megaphone, a POLICEMAN orders people to clear the street; there's a curfew in effect.

1. HENRY
You gone be all right, Miss Clark?

2. AIBILEEN
I be all right. You go on now, Henry.

3. HENRY
You want me to walk ya?

4. AIBILEEN
No, thank you. I'll be all right.

5. HENRY
Well, you have a good night.

INT. JACKSON JOURNAL - MORGUE - DAY

Mr. Blackly sticks his head in the room. Skeeter quickly covers her research with her notebook and looks up.
1. MR. BLACKLY
Miss Phelan! Presses are heating up! I needed "Miss Myrna" thirty minutes ago.

2. SKEETER
Yes, sir.

3. MR. BLACKLY
Chop-chop.
(sighs)
Good Lord.

INT. FOOTE HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Minny walks into Celia's bedroom and hears water running joined with muffled crying behind the bathroom door. She leans in, pressing her ear to the door.

1. MINNY
Miss Celia?

2. CELIA (O.S.)
Minny, go home. I'll see you tomorrow.
(Minny twists the knob. It's locked)

3. MINNY
You mess up your hair coloring again? I helped you fix it last time. We got it back to butter batch. It was real pretty, remember? Miss Celia.

4. CELIA (O.S.)
I told you, go home!

AT THE COUNTER

Henry, the fry cook, walks over to Skeeter's place at the counter. He intimates that he has something to tell her. Careful not to look at her, he busies himself with work as he mumbles.

1. HENRY
Miss Skeeter, you best get over to Miss Aibileen's house. Now.

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - DAY

A phone has been brought to Miss Stein's table. She's having a working lunch with two other publishing types.
She sips a Martini while talking to Skeeter.

1. MISS STEIN
I leave early this week for thanksgiving and then our last editor's meeting is December 17th. If you want a prayer of this getting
read, I need it by then.

INT. PHELAN HOME - PANTRY (INTERCUT) - DAY
Skeeter talks to Miss Stein on the phone.
2. SKEETER
But that's in three weeks, Miss Stein!
3. MISS STEIN
Otherwise it goes in The Pile.
(Miss Stein smirks knowingly to her co-workers)
You don't want it in The Pile.
The co-workers snicker at Miss Stein's remark.
4. SKEETER
Yes, Ma'am.
5. MISS STEIN
And put something personal in there. Write about the maid who raised you.
6. SKEETER
I understand

INT. FOOTE ESTATE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME
Celia sits at the kitchen table halfway through the pie she tried to give to the bridge girls.
Minny fumes over a bowl of peas she's shelling.
1. MINNY
Don't be taking those women any more pies, you understand?
(Minny turns to reveal a deep cut and bruise above her eye)
2. CELIA
They made me stand there like I was the vacuum salesman. Why, Minny?
3. MINNY
'Cause they know about you getting knocked up by Mr. Johnny. Mad you married one a they mens. Especially since Miss Hilly and Mister Johnny had just broke up, too.
4. CELIA
So Hilly probably thinks I was fooling around with Johnny while they were still going steady.
5. MINNY
Mm-hmmm. And Missus Walters always said Miss Hilly still sweet on Mister Johnny, too.
(Celia suddenly slaps her thigh with excitement)
6. CELIA
No wonder! They don't hate me. They hate what they think I did!
7. MINNY
They hate you 'cause they think you white trash!
(Minny's words bounce off of Celia's ears)

8. CELIA
Well, I'm just going to have to let
Hilly know I ain't no boyfriend
stealer. In fact, I'll tell her
Friday night at the benefit.
(Celia rises and smiles like she just cured cancer)

9. MINNY
You don't need to be going to that
benefit, Miss Celia. Did you hear me? Now you just stay
home.

INT. AIBILEEN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aibileen and Skeeter are speechless.

1. AIBILEEN
You try' to get yourself killed?!

2. MINNY
No! I wasn't plannin' on tellin' her, Aibileen! I just wanted to see
her take a bite and then I was gonna leave. Be done with her forever.
(Minny's eyes narrow)
Before I knew it, I had done told that woman what was in that pie.
(Aibileen looks to Skeeter, shaking her head)
I've done asked God to forgive me. But more for what happened to poor
Missus Walters. Miss Hilly threw her in that nursing home just for laughing.

3. AIBILEEN
(gravely)
We can't put that story in the book.

4. MINNY
We ain't got no choice! Hilly Holbrook can't let nobody know that
pie story is about her.

5. AIBILEEN
Exactly! If people find out "The Terrible Awful" was you and Miss
Hilly, we're in trouble there ain't words for!

6. MINNY
Right! But don't you see? She going to her grave convincing folks
this book ain't about Jackson. Now that keeps us safe. Insured.

7. SKEETER
No, no. That's too dangerous.
(Minny stands up quickly)

8. MINNY
All right, y'all two brought me into this, but I'm gonna finish it!
Either put it in or pull my parts out all together. Y'all pick!

INT. ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL - BALLROOM

A waiter brings Celia another drink.
1. WAITER
   Your cocktail.
2. CELIA
   Thank you.
(The waiter moves off. Johnny turns to his wife)
3. JOHNNY
   Honey, don't you think you've had enough to drink? I wish you'd try and eat something.
4. CELIA
   I'm not havin' my stomach poke out!

INT. FOOTE ESTATE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Minny stands in the doorway of Celia's bedroom. Distraught, Celia is packing a suitcase.
1. CELIA
   I'm not right for this kind of life, Minny. I don't need a dining room table for twelve people. I couldn't get two people over here if I begged. I can't do this to Johnny anymore. That's why I gotta go back to Sugar Ditch.
   (Celia starts to cry)
2. MINNY
   You can't move back to Sugar Ditch, Miss Celia.
   (Minny leads Celia to a bench at the foot of the bed)

INT. PHELAN HOME (FLASHBACK) - DINING ROOM - DAY

1. RACHEL
   Hello, Miss Charlotte.
   (Rachel is groomed and well dressed. Charlotte forms a tight smile)
2. CHARLOTTE
   Rachel. We were expecting you next week.
3. RACHEL
   I decided to come early and surprise Momma.
   (Rachel starts to open the screen door to enter. Charlotte pulls it shut)
I'm entertaining. **Why don't you go around back and wait in the kitchen.**

( The DAR women's body language conveys their shock at a black woman bold enough to enter uninvited. Constantine grows worried)

Go on now!

(Charlotte closes the door on the stunned Rachel and goes back to her seat)

(to the ladies)

I am sorry.

(Rachel opens the door and walks into the dining room. All eyes are on her)

Rachel, what are you doing?

5. RACHEL

*I'm just doing as I was told, Miss Charlotte. Goin' to the kitchen.*

**But I'm gonna see Momma first.** (Rachel walks up to Constantine.)

Hello, Momma.

(Constantine tries to walk Rachel to the kitchen)

6. CONSTANTINE

Go on to the kitchen, baby. I'll be there directly. Go on, go, go. Go, go.

INT. NURSING HOME - MISSUS WALTERS' ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

1. MISSUS WALTERS

Well, it's a wonderful book, Hilly.

Filled with grippin' testimonials from Mississippi's housekeepers.

HOLBROOK'S HOUSE (INTERCUT) - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

2. HILLY

Okay, Momma! I need to run.

3. MISSUS WALTERS

**You should read the book, Hilly. It's quite scandalous.**

It sounds like Jackson, if you ask me.

(Hilly's sudden silence fills Missus Walters with delight)

Quite scandalous.

4. HILLY

What book?

(Missus Walters raises the magnifying glass to the book)

5. MISSUS WALTERS

Uh, The Help. H-E-L-P.

EXT. PHELAN HOME - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tires crunch gravel down the drive. Skeeter sees a car moving toward her and soon recognizes the car as Hilly's.
Hilly gets out of her car smoking a cigarette and storms toward the front door.

1. SKEETER
What the hell..?

(Hilly stops and turns toward the approaching Skeeter)

2. SKEETER
What are you doing here?

(Hilly throws her cigarette at Skeeter)

3. HILLY
I've contacted my lawyer, Hibbie Goodman. He's the best libel attorney in the state. Oh Missy, you're going to jail!

4. SKEETER
You can't prove anything.

5. HILLY
Oh, I one-hundred-percent know you wrote it 'cause nobody else in town is as tacky as you.

6. SKEETER
You don't know anything, Hilly.

7. HILLY
I don't, do I? You tell Aibileen, the next time she wants to write about my dear friend Elizabeth...uhhuh. Remember her? Had you in her wedding? Let's just say, Aibileen ought to've been a little bit smarter before puttin' in about that L-shaped scratch in poor Elizabeth's dining table. And that nigger, Minny? Do I have plans for her.

8. SKEETER
Careful, Hilly. Now that's chapter twelve. Don't give yourself away now.

9. HILLY
That was not me!

INT. PHELAN HOME - RECEIVING ROOM

Skeeter and Charlotte cross the living room together.

1. CHARLOTTE
Skeeter, do you have plans tomorrow?

2. SKEETER
No, Ma'am.

3. CHARLOTTE
Good.

(Skeeter leads her mother to a sofa, helps her sit)

Because we are going shopping. No single daughter of mine is going to New York City, representing the great state of Mississippi, without a proper cosmopolitan wardrobe.

4. SKEETER

30
How do you know about New York?

5. CHARLOTTE
Oh, well, Miss Stein called last night.

EXT. FOOTE ESTATE - SIDE WALK - DAY

Minny walks up the long front walk of the Foote Estate, holding a bag of groceries in one arm, a fan in the other hand, and her purse slung over her arm at the elbow. Minny slows as she hears a car approaching behind her. She turns to see Johnny Foote behind the wheel of his car. Minny freezes as Johnny stops his car.

1. JOHNNY
Need some help with those?

(Johnny gets out of the car. His approach is a little too quick for Minny's comfort. She takes off toward the house with her best gallop)

2. MINNY
Miss Celia!

Johnny chases after her. Minny, hey, stop!

(Minny drops the groceries, the purse and the fan)

Miss Celia!

3. JOHNNY
Minny!

4. MINNY
Stay back! Stay back!

(Minny picks up a fallen branch from the ground and rears it back like a weapon)

5. JOHNNY
Hey, I'm not here to hurt you, girl! You wanna put the stick down?

6. MINNY
(shaking her head no)

Um-um.

(Minny breathes heavily)

7. JOHNNY
Listen, Celia finally told me about the babies. All of 'em. But I also know that the minute you started working here, she started getting better. So you saved her life.

8. MINNY
You...knew I was here the whole time?

9. JOHNNY
Fried chicken and okra on the first night? Y'all should have at least
put corn pone on the table.
(Minny tosses the stick down, shakes her head)
10. MINNY
No... I couldn't let you eat no more corn pone, Mister Johnny.
11. JOHNNY
Well, thanks to you, now I've had to let out every pair of pants I own.
(Minny starts to collect the groceries)
Oh, no. You just leave that.
(Johnny picks up Minny's purse, bag and fan)
Here you go. Let's head on up to the house.

INT. FOOTE ESTATE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny leads Minny into the dining room. The table, set beautifully in silver and crystal, is covered with delicious-looking casseroles, baked goods and fried chicken.
Celia steps forward proudly.
1. MINNY
What's all this?
2. CELIA
I cooked it all by myself.
3. JOHNNY
Yes, she did. She was up all night.
4. CELIA
I wanted to do something special. I wanted to say "thank you."
(Completely surprised and moved, Minny becomes emotional)
5. MINNY
So...I ain't losing my job?
6. JOHNNY
No, you've got a job with us for the rest of your life, if you want it.

INT. LEEFOLT HOME - KITCHEN - LATER THAT MORNING

Aibileen enters with two bags of groceries. Elizabeth calls out from the den.
1. ELIZABETH (O.C.)
Aibileen, can you come here, please?

Aibileen enters to find Elizabeth and Hilly staring at her.
Elizabeth holds her six month old baby boy.
2. AIBLEELEN
Good morning.
3. **HILLY**
Aibileen, the silver I lent Elizabeth last week.
4. **AIBLEEN**
It not polished good? Humidity been fighting me on polishing day.
5. **HILLY**
When you returned it, three pieces were missing from the felt wrapper.
   A fork and two spoons.
6. **AIBLEEN**
Lemme...lemme go check in the kitchen. Maybe I left some behind.
7. **HILLY**
You know as well as I do that silver's not in the kitchen.
   (Aibileen turns to Elizabeth)
8. **AIBLEEN**
You check in Mae Mobley's bed? Since Lil' Man was born, she been putting things-
9. **HILLY**
Do you hear her, Elizabeth? She's trying to blame it on a toddler.
   (Elizabeth won't look at Aibileen)
10. **AIBLEEN**
I ain't got no silver.
   (Elizabeth whispers to Hilly)
11. **ELIZABETH**
She says she doesn't have them.
   (Mae Mobley runs into the room, heads straight for Aibileen)
12. **HILLY**
Then it behooves me to inform you that you are fired, Aibileen. And I'll be calling the police.
   (Mae Mobley grabs Aibileen's skirt)
13. **MAE MOBLEY**
Aibee, my froat hurts.
14. **AIBLEEN**
I'll go get her some syrup, Miss Leefolt.
15. **HILLY**
Elizabeth can take care of her own children.
   (Elizabeth looks to Hilly somewhat upset with this suggestion)
16. **ELIZABETH**
I'll go get the cough syrup.
   (Aibileen reaches for the baby boy in Elizabeth's arms)
17. **AIBLEEN**
Come here, Lil' Man.
   (Hilly steps between Aibileen and Elizabeth)
18. **ELIZABETH**
I'm okay.
(Elizabeth takes Lil’ Man and leaves the room. Aibileen stands firm in front of Hilly)

19. Aibileen
I didn't steal no silver.

20. Hilly
**Maybe I can't send you to jail for what you wrote, but I can send you for being a thief.**

21. Aibileen
(quickly)
I know something about you. Don't you forget that.

(Hilly narrows her eyes)
And from what Yule May says, they's a lot a time to write letters from jail. Plenty a time to write the truth about you, and the paper is free.

22. Hilly
Nobody would believe what you wrote.

23. Aibileen
I don’t know. I been told I'm a pretty good writer! Already sold a lot a books!

Elizabeth returns with the syrup, Mae Mobley following behind. Aibileen approaches Hilly and leans into her face.

24. Hilly
Call the police, Elizabeth.

(Elizabeth doesn't move)

25. Aibileen
All you do is scare and lie to get what you want.

26. Elizabeth
Aibileen, stop!

27. Aibileen
(to Hilly)
You a godless woman. Ain't you tired, Miss Hilly? Ain't you tired?

28. Elizabeth
*Aibileen, you have to go now.*

(Aibileen kneels down to Mae Mobley. Aibileen begins to cry)

29. Mae Mobley
Don't go, Aibilee!

30. Aibileen

**Baby, you need to get back to bed.**

31. Mae Mobley
Please don't leave.

32. Aibileen
I gots to, Baby. I am so sorry.

33. Mae Mobley
Are you going to take care of another little girl?
34. AIBILEEN
No, that's not the reason. I don't want to leave you, but...it's time for me to retire. You my last little girl.

35. MAE MOBLEY
Noooo!

36. AIBILEEN
Baby, baby, I need you to remember ever thing I told you. Okay? Do you remember what I told you?

(Mae Mobley nods)

37. MAE MOBLEY
You is kind. You is smart. You is important.

38. AIBILEEN
That's right, Baby Girl.