

EXT. OKLAHOMA HILLSIDE - DAY

Two Chickasaw men carry a small body wrapped in burlap. They lay it down next to fifty others.

MONTFORD (V.O.)

... But it was disease ...

EXT. JOHNSON'S CABIN - 1844 - NIGHT

Bright stars hang above a modest, well-built log cabin.

MONTFORD (V.O.)

... That changed my life forever.

INT. JOHNSON'S CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A 6 year-old boy, MONTFORD JOHNSON -- anxious with worry -- he snuggles closer to a feverish, young woman dying of pneumonia, REBEKAH (BECKY) COURTNEY JOHNSON (22), attractive and once-strong Chickasaw-Scottish woman - she's propped up in the cabin's single bed. She's pale and wheezing. At her other side is ADELAIDE (8), an angel of a child, now stricken with fearful anxiety.

CHARLES "BOGGY" JOHNSON (25), an English Shakespearean actor with a bright, dramatic presence, enters the room, and kneels next to the bed, takes her hand.

Montford and Rebekah share a well worn STUFFED COW -- their lone toy. Rebekah takes the cow and playfully dances it away from Montford.

REBEKAH

If you had a hundred cows and you lost one, wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine and rescue the one lost cow?

Her voice is weak.

YOUNG MONTFORD

But what if I get lost looking? Who will find me?

BOGGY

I will, Montford.

Boggy enters. Rebekah smiles then erupts into a series of wet, ragged coughs.

GRANNY VICEY HARMON (44), a beloved traditional Chickasaw woman, enters with a cup of sassafras tea. Granny Vicey helps Rebekah take a few sips.

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START

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GRANNY VICEY

Here... this'll help your breathin'
better.

Rebekah takes a sip -- its therapeutic effect is
instantaneous.

REBEKAH

'Member, the first time I met your
father, he tried to drown me... in
the Mississippi River. Yes, sir.

ADELAIDE

Papa!

BOGGY

It most certainly wasn't on
purpose.

The actor in Boggy comes to life -- he knows he must project
strength, and he clears his throat to begin one of his
greatest performances.

BOGGY

I saw her in the audience when I
was on stage... she was the most
stunning woman this roaming
Englishman had ever laid eyes on.
Her beauty made me forget my
lines...

Emotion thickens his throat -- he stops himself from sobbing,
clears his throat again and regains his actor's control over
his emotions.

BOGGY

(to kids)

I was so affected I ran to find her
after the performance...

GRANNY VICEY

(interrupting)

... We were walking home along the
riverbank and he came up quickly,
stepped on the hem of your mother's
dress...

REBEKAH

...He tripped me and I fell into
the river.

Adelaide and Montford look at their father, surprised. He
feigns a big, open mouthed protest.

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BOGGY

(to the children)

But I jumped in to save her,
naturally. I am a gentleman, you
know.

GRANNY VICEY

He didn't know that your mother was
the best swimmer in the Nation.

BOGGY

And I forgot I couldn't swim.

REBEKAH

So I saved him.

The children laugh. Rebekah - again racked by a fit of deep,
painful coughing -- she finds it hard to catch her breath.

The children are alarmed.

Boggy and Granny Vacey try to soothe Rebekah, as she labors
to breathe between retching coughs with broken lungs. She
finally catches her breath, breathes through her nose, and
the coughing subsides. Rebekah regains her composure.

She levels a hard gaze at them.

REBEKAH

Adelaide, Montford, I want you to
remember... you are Chickasaw...
you know what that means.

Rebekah gasps for air -- her lungs are so damaged they rattle
when she breathes -- she closes her eyes, and the camera
cranes upward, passes through the roof of the cabin and up
into the stars above.

END

EXT. JOHNSON CABIN -- 1844 -- DAY

Granny Vacey steps out onto the front porch from the smoky
interior of the cabin, she fans smoke from a bundle of
burning tobacco -- she completes her ritual of helping
Rebekah's spirit on its way.

At the head of Rebekah's grave Boggy stands with Adelaide and
Montford, who hugs his stuffed cow tightly.

LATER -

Boggy, lost in thought, cinches a saddle around his horse.

GRANNY VICEY

Planning on leaving?

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