

CUT TO:

22. INT. (DAY) – AUGUSTA SAVAGE'S STUDIO (IMPASSE DE L'ASTROLABE)  
- 1929

Paulette creaks open the unlocked door of the studio of  
AUGUSTA SAVAGE (37), Harlem Renaissance portrait sculptor.

PAULETTE NARDAL

Hello?

(beat)

Ms. Savage?

The room is spare and tidy. Several SHAPES, ranging from about a foot high to life-size, are covered with WET SHEETS. The TOOLS of a clay sculptor lay at the ready, but clean. On the walls of the room are various sketches, all figurative, but some more imaginative than others.

Paulette fingers a cloth, then makes to pick up a corner.

Augusta comes up behind her without her noticing. She is a thin young woman from Florida with an unusually soft voice and an open manner that makes her immediately likable. She is wearing a coat and boots.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

It's a child.

Paulette starts.

PAULETTE NARDAL

Sorry? Oh, I'm sorry.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Don't be.

PAULETTE NARDAL

Did you say, "child"?

Augusta laughs.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Don't worry. There are no children here.

She comes and unveils the sculpture that Paulette had been about to peek at.

It's a naked boy holding his stomach. Its base reads, "Green Apples."

Paulette laughs.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
It needs no title.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
Is it so clear?

PAULETTE NARDAL  
And so funny. Only a black woman could make such a perfect representation and at the same time make it so funny.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
Really? Should I feel good or bad about that?

Paulette blushes.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
I'm sorry. You look as if you were about to go out.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
Not a problem. I'm Augusta Savage.

She extends her hand.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
Paulette Nardal. I came with the intention of writing about you for *La Dépêche africaine*. It's a monthly...

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
I know the one. That would be wonderful! I'll just... Would you like a cup of tea?

PAULETTE NARDAL  
Oh yes. That would be lovely.

Augusta goes to a small portable stove and lights a match.

She takes off her coat.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

I'm so happy to finally be in Paris.

PAULETTE NARDAL

I'd read about the scholarship you received in 1923. Six years ago?

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Working at the Chateau would have been lovely. I suppose the discovery that I'm black came as quite a surprise.

PAULETTE NARDAL

Our loss. Still, Fontainebleau is not precisely Paris. I'm glad you're here now.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

I'm glad six years and innumerable interventions on the part of DuBois made a difference.

PAULETTE NARDAL

Your work speaks for itself.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Thank you.

The water is boiling. Augusta pours it into a teapot and waits.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE (CONT'D)

Feel free to undress anything.

Paulette smiles.

PAULETTE NARDAL

(lifting the wet skirts of a sculpture)

What's this?

Four women's heads, carved from the same block as their bodies, hold up the globe of the earth, supported by their four raised arms. The four folded legs form a star.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
To me, it's a black deity.

Augusta hands Paulette a hot cup of tea.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
It is like a new female  
constellation.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
(pleased)  
It's interesting you say that. I  
was reading a book of myths from  
various places in Africa. Oh, you  
know Alain Locke, yes?

Paulette nods.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE (CONT'D)  
So he has been bringing a lot of  
artwork from the Congo for us to  
see, a little from Nigeria too.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
That's interesting that you say  
that. Someone asked me last year  
about the graphics in Harlem and  
where people are seeing artwork  
from Africa to inspire them.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
Well, Stieglitz and a couple of  
other gallerists brought stuff to  
New York, but obviously Locke  
cares in particular. Anyway, I  
found this book of myths on my  
own, and many of them seem to  
involve women and girls in the  
stars.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
I suppose in Greek mythology we  
only have Atlas holding up the  
sky.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
And from my point of view, it's  
the women who do that.

They smile at each other.  
Paulette looks up, diluting their energy.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE (CONT'D)  
You're welcome to look at  
anything. I have a few Amazons  
here and there.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
Do I seem inclined to interest in  
hard-working women?

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
I hope so.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
So you're studying here?

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
(sighs)  
I'm getting a little old to  
pretend respect where it's not  
due.

Paulette raises an eyebrow and sips her tea.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE (CONT'D)  
It's just... At this point, when I  
win something – just last year,  
for example, with *Head of a Negro*  
at the Harmon Foundation – I can't  
seem to let go of *why* and *how*  
decisions are made. It's as if the  
more I've had opportunities given  
and taken, the less patience I  
have for nonsense.

PAULETTE NARDAL  
And here? In Paris?

AUGUSTA SAVAGE  
Well, here I like my mentor, and  
he's encouraging – and please  
don't write this, I don't know why  
I'm telling you – but he truly  
wants to make his pupils into  
editions of himself, as it were.  
You see?

PAULETTE NARDAL.

I see. Yes, your work should at this point support your character, not someone else's. And it should be awarded because it's good.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Not because of a fad for primitivism.

PAULETTE NARDAL

Have you been anywhere in Africa?

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

No, and actually... do you know Marcus Garvey?

PAULETTE NARDAL

I've read about his ambitions. I wasn't in Paris for the Pan African Congress, though, and of course he's been imprisoned the last two years.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Right. Well, he'll be here soon. Do you know a translator? He doesn't have French.

PAULETTE NARDAL

I translate. I actually learned most of my English in Jamaica. You're friends?

Augusta nods.

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Honestly, he needs an office too.

PAULETTE NARDAL

I'll see what I can do. Is he convincing you to find your roots, then?

AUGUSTA SAVAGE

Well, first Paris. Then we'll see.

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