

Quotes from *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”* by Zora Neale Hurston

Directions: All of the quotes below have been taken from *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”* by Zora Neale Hurston.

PART ONE

Opening Quote

Pages 20-21

“Where is de house where de mouse is de leader? In de Affica soil I cain tellee you ‘bout de son before I tellee you ‘bout de father; and derefore, you unnerstand me, I cain talk about de man who is father (*et te*) til I tellee you bout de man who he father to him, (*et, te, te, grandfater*) now, dass right ain’ it?”

Home in Africa:

Page 44

“De king of Dahomey, you know, he got very rich ketchin slaves. He keep his army all de time making raids to grabee people to sell so de people of Dahomey doan have no time to raise gardens an’ make food for deyselves.”

Pages 44-45

“Maybe de king of Dahomey never come make raid in Takkoi, but one traitor from Takkoi go in de Dahomey. He a very bad man and de king (of Takkoi) say, ‘Leave this country.’ Dat man want big honors in de army so he go straight in Dahomey and say to de king, ‘I show you how to takee Takkoi.’ He tellee dem de secret of de gates.”

Page 45

“I see de people gittee kill so fast! De old ones dey try run ‘way from de house but dey dead by de door, and de women soldiers got dey head. Oh, Lor’!”

Pages 45

“Everybody dey run to de gates so dey kin hide deyself in de bush, you unnerstand me. Some never reachee de gate”

Pages 45-46

"Some dey snatch de jaw-bone while de people ain' dead. Oh Lor,' Lor, Lor'! De poor folkses wid dey bottom jaw tore off dey face! I runnee fast to de gate but some de men from Dahomey dey derer too. I runnee to de nexy gate but dey dere too. Dey surround de whole town. Dey at all de eight gates."

Pages 48-49

"De heads of de men of Dahomey got 'gin to smell very bad. Oh, Lor', I wish dey bury dem! I doan lak see my people head in de soldier hands; and de smell makee me so sick!"

"De nexy day, dey make camp all day so dat de people kin smoke de heads so dey don't spoil no mo'. Oh Lor' Lor', Lor'! We got to set dere and see de heads of our people smokin' on de stick. We stay dere in dat place de nine days. Den we march on to de Dahomey soil."

PART TWO

Preparing for Voyage

Page 55

"When we ready to leave de Kroo boat and go in de ship, de Many-costs snatch our country cloth off us. We try save our clothes, we ain' used to be without no clothes on. But dey snatch all off us. Dey say, 'You get plenty clothes where you goin'.' Oh Lor', I so shame! We come in de 'Merica soil naked and de people say we naked savage. Dey say we doan wear no clothes. Dey doan know de Many-costs snatch our clothes 'way from us."

Page 55

"Soon we git in de ship dey make us lay down in de dark. We stay dere thirteen days. Dey doan give us much to eat. Me so thirst! Dey give us a little bit of water twice a day. Oh Lor', Lor', we so thirst! De water taste sour. (Vinegar was usually added to the water to prevent scurvy—Canot.)"

Page 55

“De boat we on called de *Clotilde*. Cudjo suffer so in dat ship. Oh Lor’! I so skeered on de sea! De water, you unnerstand me, it makee so much noise! It growl lak de thousand beastes in de bush. De wind got so much voice on de water.”

Page 55

“One day de color of de water change and we see some islands, but we doan come to de shore for seventy days.”

Page 56

“We been on de water seventy days and we spend some time layin’ down in de ship till we tired, but many days we on de deck. Nobody ain’ sick and nobody ain’ dead. Cap’n Bill Foster a good man. He don’t ‘buse us and treat us mean on de ship.”

Page 56

“Dey tell me it a Sunday us way down in de ship and tell us to keep quiet. Cap’n Bill Foster, you unnerstand me, he skeered de gov’ment folks in de Fort Monroe goin’ ketchee de ship.”

PART THREE

After Arriving in Mobile

Page 56

“When it night de ship move ain. Cudjo didn’t know den whut dey do, but dey tell me dey towed de ship up de Spanish Creek to Twelve-Mile Island. Dey took us off de ship and we git on another ship. Den dey burn de *Clotilde* ‘cause dey skeered de gov’ment goin’ rest dem for fetchin’ us ‘way from Affica soil.”

Page 61

"De war commences but we doan know 'bout it when it start: we see white folks runnee up and down. Dey go in de Mobile. Dey come out on de plantation. Den somebody tell me de folkses way up in de North make de war so dey free us. I lak hear dat. Cudjo doan want to be no slave. But we wait and wait, we heard de guns shootee sometime but nobody don't come tell us we free. So we think maybe dey fight 'bout something else."

Page 62

"Free George, he come to us and tell us not to dance on Sunday. Den he tell us whut Sunday is. We doan know whut it is before. Nobody in Afficky soil doan tell us 'bout no Sunday. Den we doan dance no mo' on de Sunday."

Page 62

"Know how we gittee free? Cudjo tellee you dat. De boat I on, it in de Mobile. We all on dere to go in de Montgomery, but Cap'n Jim Meaher, he not on de boat dat day"

Page 62-63

"I doan forgit. It April 12, 1865. De Yankee soldiers dey come down to de boat and eatee de mulberries off de trees close to de boat, you unnerstand me. Den dey see us on de boat and dey say 'Y'all can't stay dere no mo'. You free, you doan b'long to nobody no mo'.' Oh, Lor'! I so glad. We astee de soldiers where we goin'? Dey say dey doan know. Dey told us to go where we feel lak goin', we ain' no mo' slave."

Page 65

"We glad we free, but den, you unnerstand me, we cain stay wid de folks what own us no mo'. Derefo' where we goin' live, we doan know. Some de folks from cross de water dey done marry and got de wife and chillun, you unnerstand me. Cudjo not marry yet. In de Affica soil when de man gottee de wife, he build de house so dey live together and derefo' de chillun come. So we want buildee de houses for ourselves, but we ain' got no lan'. Where we goin' buildee our houses?"