



# Nanny

WARRIOR QUEEN



# SYNOPSIS

## LOGLINE

From the mystical land of Xong to 18th century Africa, to the trans-Atlantic slave ships, to the sugar plantations of Jamaica rises Nanny: Woman, Warrior, Freedom-fighter, Queen of the Maroons, who leads her glorious people into battle after battle against the British, taking us into her world of magic, mystery, love, loss and triumph.

## NANNY

Before Bolt, there was Marley. Before Marley, there was Garvey. Before Garvey, there was Nanny - Queen of the Maroons. She is Jamaica's only National Heroine - a freedom fighter who, in the 18th century, led and won battle after battle against the British, catching their bullets in her backside and throwing them back at them. She is a composite of great women, some say; a myth, some say. Expand the myth and you have entered our story, the kingdom of XONG, found in a parallel universe.

## ACT I

### ADWOA OF XONG

(3 EPISODES)

This lush and majestic land is temperamental, changing its terrain and climate, seemingly on whims. The natives are not perturbed by this. But, they have to watch out for the odd and sudden appearances of trans-universe portals at dusk. After all, it is through one of these portals that a piece of their kingdom broke off and fell to a place called Earth. Resources are plentiful. There is nothing to fight for, except for power and greed. There, magic is ordinary, powers are not super; everyone has special abilities. But, the special are few and have royal blood coursing through their veins.

Princess Adwoa draws her powers from the elements: she is air, earth and rain. She is versed in the art of Lhaji, trained to fight like any male warrior and, conversely, she is adept at healing, using herbs grown deep in the woods. **She is wise, compassionate and arrogant, the light of her father's eyes.** His decision to name her his successor enrages his sons as well as his brother whose treacherous plot leads to

Adwoa falling through one of the portals and tumbling to Earth.

### **The Capture and the Fort**

Adwoa awakes from a brief state of unconsciousness. It is 1704. Her body aches and burns as it tries to adapt to this new climate. Her powers have left her. She is Black. She is in the Gold Coast. She is a future slave.

The young princess is captured by slavers and taken to a slave castle where she meets the elder, Yaa, a fellow Xong. Yaa becomes the princess's mentor as they take the perilous voyage across the seas, teaching Adwoa of humility, brotherhood and garnering support, as the way to proudly survive servitude. Yaa tells the young princess that slavery is like covert war and should be treated as such. **The aim is not only to survive, but to conquer.**

Adwoa holds close to Yaa. But, dysentery sneaks in. Without her herbs, Adwoa is powerless to save her new friend. Yaa dies while chained to Adwoa. Her body is removed and thrown into the ocean. A broken Adwoa continues on the long journey to the New World.

## ACT 2

### **NANNY, A SLAVE**

(3 EPISODES)

The ship arrives in Jamaica and Adwoa disembarks in chains. It is the first time in months that her feet are touching land. She hears a familiar sound, as if the earth has spoken to her. This land is familiar. She doesn't know it now, but this is the lost piece of Xong. She bends and sinks her fingers into the soil, breathing in as new energy flows through her. Something catches her attention. She looks up and sees Cudjoe, her former combat trainer, in the crowd. Their eyes lock for a moment, but he soon disappears. Adwoa is taken to the Slave Market where she is auctioned off to Charles Anderson, an English planter, who renames her 'Nanny' and puts her to work in his house. His wife, maybe sensing Nanny's royal blood, is secretly intrigued with her. But, so is he, and he pays for it dearly: with his life. Nanny flees the plantation, but struggles to settle in any one place. She wants to go home.

## ACT 3 NANNY, WARRIOR QUEEN OF THE MAROONS

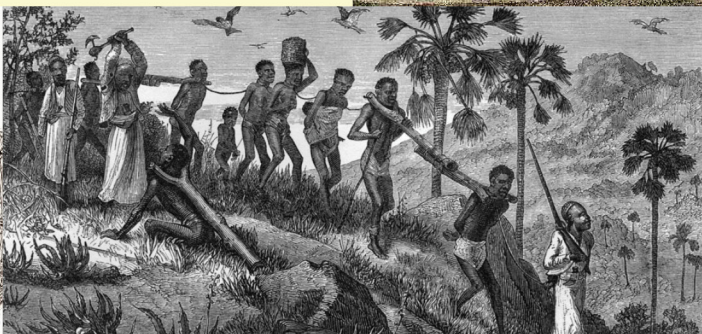
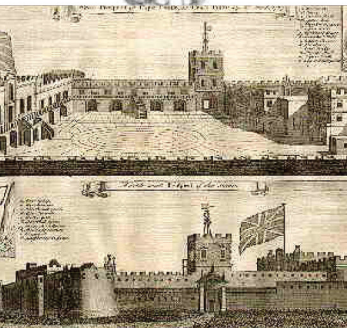
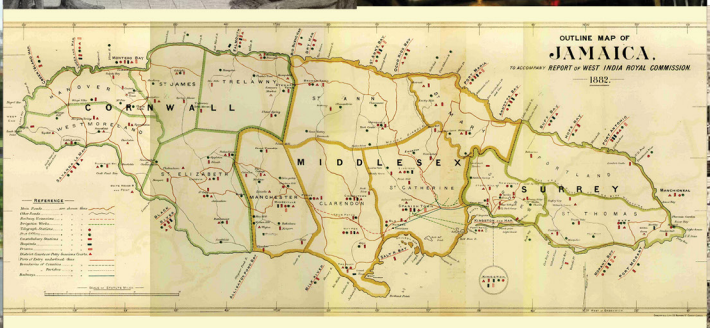
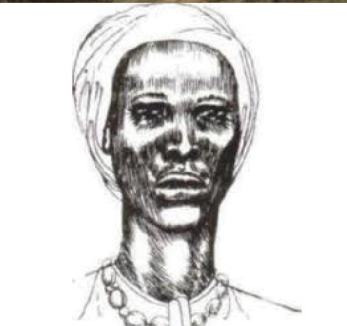
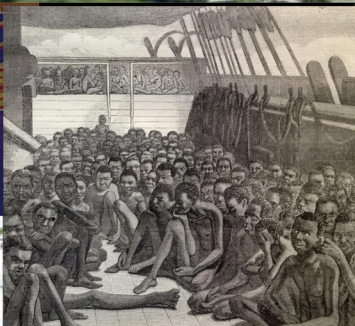
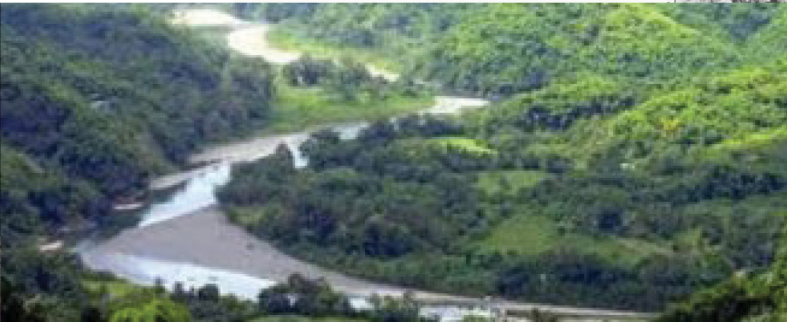
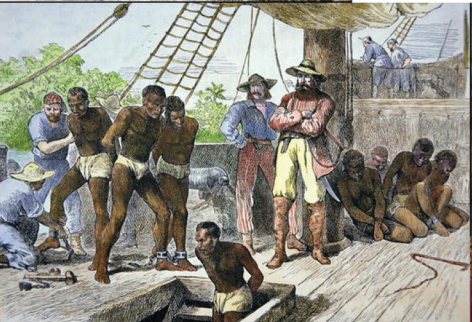
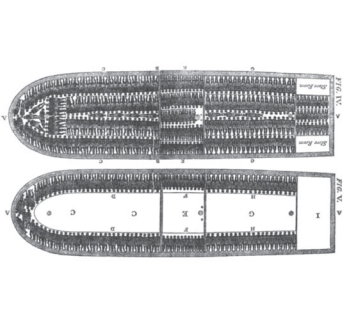
(4 EPISODES)

Nanny is on the run. Her connection to the earth strengthens and her power from the elements return and she sharpens her fighting and healing skills. She moves like a ghost from plantation to plantation in search of Cudjoe, appearing, seemingly out of nowhere, then disappearing in the wind. **She defends, guides and heals those whom she meets and soon becomes a myth among the enslaved.**

Nanny's search eventually takes her to the hills, to the Maroons, but her presence is not readily welcomed. They will only accept her if she embraces the relegated role of 'woman' in their society. Though this is offensive to her being, she feels a kinship with them, and so, she makes it her new home. But Nanny can't remain subservient for too long. Her calling is too great. She soon rises to power, gaining admiration from some and resentment and envy from others. She is renamed **'Queen Nanny of the Maroons'**.

# SERIES

This 10-episode series takes us through Nanny's journey from her life in Xong, her capture in West Africa, her time on the plantation where she begins to slowly reclaim her other-worldly powers, to her finally taking her place as Queen of a glorious people. She leads them through many battles, victorious each time; she falls in love with Kwaku, a fellow Maroon and claims him as her king; Cudjoe's betrayal; the call of her birthright vs the call of her heart; her return to Xong to claim her throne, then back to Jamaica; her final battle; and, the death of her king. Nanny is caught between two worlds. She is queen of both. Which does she choose?



# CHARACTERS

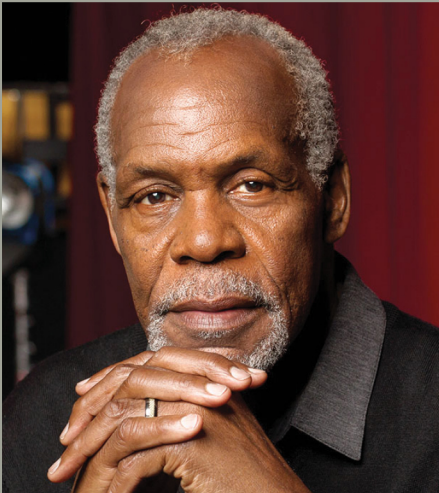


## ADWOA

Adwoa is the middle child and only daughter of King Kwame. She deems her brothers as inferior to her, in fact most people are. There is no one good enough for her and so, she has no desire for friends. Her quiet, cosmic power draws people in; her arrogance repels them. But, beneath her arrogance is the deep compassion that she inherited from her late mother. She abhors cruelty and will stand in defense of the vulnerable. Adwoa feels entitled to the throne, but resents the responsibilities that come with it and fears that it will deny her her freedom.

Suggested Talent:

**Shantol Jackson**



## KING KWAME

The most powerful leader in the history of Xong, Kwame's wisdom garners respect, his ruthlessness: fear. No one challenges him. He loves his two sons, but favours his only daughter, Princess Adwoa. He sees himself in her and believes the kingdom will be safest in her hands. She must succeed the throne. But, for this to happen, Kwame must break with one of Xong's most sacred traditions. He must deny his first-born his birthright. This will not go over well with many.

Suggested Talent:

**Danny Glover**



## AKWASI

Brother to the King, Akwasi is a stickler for tradition and believes himself the custodian of the culture of Xong. When he learns of Kwame's plans for the throne, he is enraged and vows to stop him. But, removal of the King will certainly bring instability to Xong. And, so, he sets his eyes on Adwoa.

Suggested Talent:  
**Dennis Haysbert**



## CUDJOE

Feared warrior and loyal subject to Adwoa, Cudjoe teaches her to lead as a fighter. He will defend Adwoa to the death, but he feels that he does not always get the respect or thanks that he deserves. He, too, falls through the portal and is captured and enslaved. When the two meet up again in Jamaica, his deep resentment towards her begin to show.

Suggested Talent:  
**Sheldon Shepherd**



## YAA

Adwoa was just a child when Yaa served in King Kwame's court. Yaa yearned for more than what Xong could offer and so she escaped to unknown places, experiencing more than most do in one lifetime. Now, she is old and near the end. But, she has one more thing to do: be Adwoa's anchor.

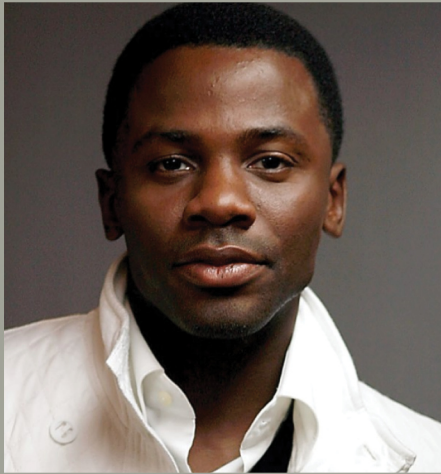
Suggested Talent:  
**Leonie Forbes**



## NANNY, WARRIOR QUEEN

From the slave castle to the middle passage to slavery on the Jamaican plantation, the once broken Nanny emerges humble, stronger, wiser to claim her role as formidable leader of the Maroons. Her arrogance is still present, but it pales in comparison to her humanity. She now feels a deep connection and comradery with the people she leads. She has found belonging.

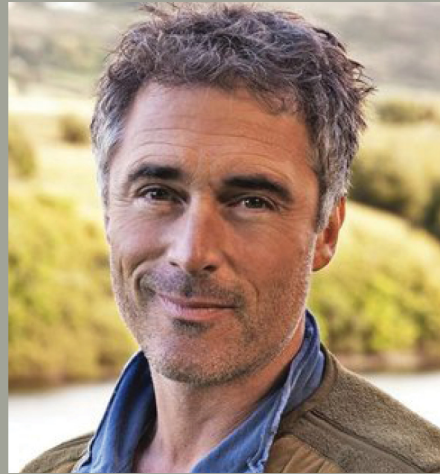
Suggested Talent:  
**Lupita Nyong'o**



## KWAKU

Son of a medicine man and one in training himself, Kwaku was captured as a youth in Ghana and eventually sold to Charles Anderson. His knowledge as a medicine man has grown since his arrival in Jamaica and he uses his skills to heal his fellow enslaved on plantations across the island. He can see deeply into a person's soul sometimes detecting illness even before the first symptom appears. He teaches Nanny how to turn pain and rage into freedom and triumph.

Suggested Talent:  
**Derek Luke**



## MAJOR GENERAL HENRY CRACKETT

Young, ambitious and eager for promotion, Crackett is bent on leading the British Army to victory over the Maroons. His approach is to divide and conquer and soon finds an ally in Cudjoe.

Suggested Talent:  
**Greg Wise/  
Barry Sloane**



## CHARLES ANDERSON

The middle aged land owner is dissatisfied with his circumstance of birth. He knows 'blue-blood' is out of his reach, so he seeks status through the acquisition of land and slaves. Sugar is his means. He marries a suitable woman who will bear him suitable heirs. But, a void remains. And he is angry, cruel and lecherous.

Suggested Talent:  
**Richard E. Grant**



## ANABELLE ANDERSON

Mistress of the plantation, she is not much older than Nanny. Annabel is lonely and unhappy. She has been married off to a man twice her age and taken from her home in England to Jamaica. She knows that her husband has affairs with several of the slaves and has paid her no mind since impregnating her several months before. She is drawn to Nanny's intelligence and powerful presence and mistakenly believes that there is friendship there.

Suggested Talent:  
**Sophie Cookson**



# LOCATION

GHANA & JAMAICA



# COMPARABLES



**THE BOOK OF NEGROES - CBC**  
Miniseries

Viewing figures:  
**1.7 Million** (January 2015)



**QUEEN - CBS**  
Miniseries

Viewing figures:  
**36.7 Million** (February 1993)



**BLACK PANTHER**  
Major Motion Picture

Worldwide Box Office Total:  
**\$1.347 Billion** (2018)

# THE AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

## NANNY

HISTORICAL HERO  
NATIONAL HERO  
SUPER HERO



This character, based on a famous maroon (escaped Slave) is the nexus of the piece, perched between realism and fantasy. Her story echoes current and universal themes that will appeal to a young, global audience as well

### Introducing to the world:

Nanny, Jamaica's first and only National Heroine, joining the world of Africa to the Caribbean; a transatlantic crossing like no other; Black queen in an historical context yet relatable to today's young women and men can relate in the current society.

Her story has never been set in stone because Nanny is, in fact, a composite of strong female leaders within the Maroon Community

NANNY  
HEALER  
LOVER  
WARRIOR  
WOMAN



We bring to the audience **one woman**: STRONG - INSPIRING - COMPASSIONATE - SUPERHERO - HUMAN.

A close-up portrait of Amba Chevannes, a Black woman with short, curly hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing large, ornate earrings. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some greenery.

# AUTHOR

**Amba Chevannes** completed an MFA in Dramatic Writing in 2001 from Tisch School of the Arts, NYU and returned to Jamaica a year later to pursue a career in both screenwriting and playwriting. Since then, she has lectured in both art forms at Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, Media Technology Institute and, presently, at The University of the West Indies, Mona.

She has conducted playwriting and screenwriting workshops in Europe and in several countries across the Caribbean and has provided script analyses and script development services to screenwriters in the Caribbean. She has acted as adjudicator for playwriting festivals in Jamaica and screenwriting competitions in Trinidad and Tobago.

Recognized as a leading screenwriter in the Caribbean, Amba's work speaks beyond race, class, gender and other socio-political and cultural boundaries. Her style ranges from drama to comedy to the absurd and her stories often take us into the hidden spaces of our societies and invite us, through laughter and tears, to face our own humanity. Her work has been produced for local television and her plays have been staged in Jamaica as well as in Europe and North and South America.

In early 2008, she added the title of 'theatre producer' to her portfolio when she became a partner in MADKOW Productions.



# PRODUCER

**Natalie Thompson** is a Jamaican born Filmmaker and development and production specialist. She studied Drama at the professional Theatre at Edgecliff College in Cincinnati, Ohio before graduating with a Degree in Drama and Communication Arts (Film and Television) from the University of Windsor in Canada. Natalie returned to Jamaica and after 2 years as a director at Noble Film Productions, she formed Cinecom Productions Limited in 1975. She quickly established herself as an award-winning commercial, documentary and industrial film producer, director and editor but wanted to move on to working with narrative projects.

Since 1980, Natalie has worked as a Production Manager and Line Producer on various feature films and TV productions shot on location in Jamaica. These include *Cocktail*, *Cool Runnings* and *Instinct* for Disney, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* and *Knight and Day* for Twentieth Century Fox. In Television she has Managed *Small Island* for Ruby Films/BBC, *Luke Cage* (Jamaica Episode) - Marvel Films, and *Top Boy* (Jamaica Episode) for BBC. She has managed several Independent Feature productions including *Popcorn*, *Milk and Honey*, *Almost Heaven*, *Treasure Island* and *Marley* and local Jamaican productions *Third World Cop*, *Ghetta Life* and *Sprinter*.

A past member of the International Board of Women in Film and Television, Natalie has been developing Jamaican and Caribbean content over the last ten years.



# PRODUCER

**Justine Henzell** is an independent film producer and oversees the legacy of *The Harder They Come*, the award winning movie, co-written, produced and directed by her father, Perry Henzell, which continues to reach a global audience 45 years after its release.

Henzell has directed two feature length documentaries highlighting the history of Jamaica. *One People - The Celebration* and *Jamaica Arise*. She is a founding member of the Jamaica Film & Television Association (JAFTA) and in 2016 initiated JAF TA Propella! which supports the production of 5 short films by Jamaican filmmakers annually.

Henzell is passionate about nurturing emerging talent and so has formed the Creatrix Collective to produce content exclusively directed by Jamaican women.

In addition to her work in film Justine is a Co-Founder and producer of the Calabash International Literary Festival which was first staged in 2001.

# CONTACT

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