

HUSBAND (WITH ELIZABETH)

HUSBAND. No, Ma'am. I didn't want to cause you no more trouble on my account.

ELIZABETH. It don't matter none.

HUSBAND. It does to me. I don't know what's gotten into Lou Bessie. She never used to act like that....

ELIZABETH. I told you before, Husband, people change.

HUSBAND. I guess. But even I know that there's change for the good and change for the bad and the way I see it, Lou Bessie ain't changed for the good. (Pause.) Anyway, if you want me to move....

ELIZABETH. I ain't said nothing about you having to move, did I? Do you want to move?

HUSBAND. No, Ma'am. I was just thinking that maybe you didn't want Lou Bessie coming around.

ELIZABETH. I ain't studying no Lou Bessie. (Pause.) I'm fixing to get me something to eat. You eat anything since the restaurant?

HUSBAND. No, Ma'am.

ELIZABETH. You hungry?

HUSBAND. I sure wouldn't mind having something to eat, yes, Ma'am.

ELIZABETH. All we have right now are leftovers. That's what we have all week when it's Quilly's turn to cook. (She crosses into the kitchen as Husband follows.)

HUSBAND. Sometimes leftovers taste better than when you first cook them. The flavor has a longer time to settle in. (Elizabeth and Husband stare at one another for a beat. Then Elizabeth crosses into the kitchen and begins to prepare the meal. Husband follows.) Can I help do something?

ELIZABETH. No. You just sit down. There ain't nothing much to do. Besides, I ain't one of those "lazy, good-for-nothing women" your mama warned you about.

HUSBAND. I could tell that from reading your letters. I could see that from the beginning. (Pause.) Miss Elizabeth, I lied.

ELIZABETH. Lied about what?

HUSBAND. About not knowing where Lou Bessie lives when she's in Harlem.

ELIZABETH. I shouldn't have asked you that. It was mean

and unchristian. My way of getting back at Lou Bessie. You ain't got to tell me nothing.

HUSBAND. But I've got to say this, Miss Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. It's not my business, Husband. And I don't want to talk about Lou Bessie.

HUSBAND. But it's important that I tell you.

ELIZABETH. Why?

HUSBAND. Because ... because of the feelings I've been having even before I found Lou Bessie. The feelings I had when I used to read your letters and they said things to me that wasn't written on the paper. Because the same feelings were there when we were laughing and talking in that restaurant. And they were there, but in a different way, when Lou Bessie called you an "Old Settler." And they were there when she got off that train in Great-Neck and I didn't care that she was leaving; and that I couldn't wait to get back here.

ELIZABETH. Why did you feel you had to lie?

HUSBAND. I didn't want you to think that I was a fool or something. I already know Mrs. McGrath don't think that much of me. (Pause.) You see ... Lou Bessie has a little three-year-old daughter that her Mama takes care of for her down in Frogmore. She had the baby by this man named Bucket....

ELIZABETH. Bucket?

HUSBAND. Yes, Ma'am, Bucket. I don't know why they call him that, but that's his name. Well, when he found out that Lou Bessie was pregnant, he took off. Now don't get me wrong, Lou Bessie ain't a bad person. She sends money down home for her little girl all the time. But she caught the devil from them people in Frogmore when they found out she was going to have a baby and wasn't married. But what really hurt her the most, was the way her mama treated her so mean. I sure felt sorry for her. So then after a while, I took up with Lou Bessie. Not because I felt sorry for her or nothing! I always had an eye for her, even when she was going with Bucket. Anyhow, Lou Bessie always claimed that she didn't know where Bucket had gone. So, last night when I finally got a chance to talk to Lou Bessie, I told her that I was going to come back here and get my things and move in with her.