

LOU BESSIE

(WITH HUSBAND & ELIZABETH)

~~ELIZABETH. How did you get in the building?
LOU BESSIE. Some fool came out and I just walked in. Now where's Andre?
ELIZABETH. You mean, Husband.
LOU BESSIE. Yeah, Husband. That's exactly who I mean.
Now, where is he? (Elizabeth crosses and calls down the hall.)
ELIZABETH. Husband!... Husband?
HUSBAND. (From offstage.) Yes, Mr'am?
ELIZABETH. Lou Bessie is here for you.
HUSBAND. (From offstage.) I'll be right there, Miss Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH. He'll be right out.
LOU BESSIE. I heard. And I told you my name is Charmaine!
ELIZABETH. I sure am going to try real hard to remember that. (Husband enters from the bathroom pulling on his shirt.)
HUSBAND. Hey, Lou Bessie. I thought....
LOU BESSIE. Don't give me that, "Hey, Lou Bessie" crap. You won that drawing for that breakfast because I took you to the Renaissance Ballroom. You've got some damn nerve taking some other woman out to eat a breakfast I won for you.
HUSBAND. I paid for the ticket, Lou Bessie. Just like I paid for everything for you last night ... and your friends. (Quilly enters changed for work.)
LOU BESSIE. I don't give a damn what you paid. I took you there. If it wasn't for me, you would have never even bought the damn ticket. Then I got to hear from my friends about you coming into Whimpy's with some other woman ... some "Old Settler" and eating breakfast at my expense. I'm out there trying to set things up for us and you're running around all hours of the night with some "Old Settler." As a matter of fact, they called her an "Old, Old, Settler," laughing their asses off.
ELIZABETH. If you're going to use that kind of language, you can't talk in here.
LOU BESSIE. I'll talk any way I want.
ELIZABETH. Not in this house you won't.
LOU BESSIE. Let's go in your room, Husband.
ELIZABETH. I told Husband when he came here to rent, no drinking, no smoking, no cursing and no women allowed in the room.~~

LOU BESSIE. What? (To Husband.) You mean you're paying rent for a room and you can't even have your own company in there?
ELIZABETH. That's right. No women in the room.
LOU BESSIE. I wasn't talking to you.
ELIZABETH. Well, I was talking to you. No women in the room!
LOU BESSIE. Well, I guess that includes you too ... doesn't it? (There is a beat of silence.)
HUSBAND. Uh ... Lou Bessie....
LOU BESSIE. I'm getting the hell out of here! (She crosses to the door and exits.)
ELIZABETH. Good! And take your foul mouth with you.
HUSBAND. Lou Bessie, wait.... (He exits after Lou Bessie. We can hear them arguing outside the door for a beat.)
QUILLY. (Pause.) Well, I'm....
ELIZABETH. I don't want to hear it, Quilly.
QUILLY. I ain't got nothing to say about him and her or him and you. Ah I want to say is that I'm leaving for work. If my white woman calls looking for me, tell her I already left. I'll tell her that the subway broke down or something. She probably won't be able to get through anyway with motor-mouth on the telephone. (She picks up the telephone and listens. Then screams into the telephone.) Get off the phone! (She slams the telephone down in the cradle. The front door opens and Husband enters, rushing to his room. After a beat, he exits his room with his jacket and hat in his hand. He crosses to the door, then steps.)
HUSBAND. I'm sorry about Lou Bessie, Miss Elizabeth. I ain't never heard her talk like that ... cursing and all. (Pause.) She has to go back to Great-Neck now. I'm going to take her to the train station ... try and calm her down. (Pause.) I'll be back. (He starts to exit. Elizabeth crosses to her rocking chair, sits and begins to rock, looking out of the window.)
ELIZABETH. Husband?
HUSBAND. Yes, Miss Elizabeth?
ELIZABETH. Where does Lou Bessie live?
HUSBAND. She lives out in Great-Neck.
ELIZABETH. No, I mean when she's here in Harlem. When