

QUILLY (WITH HUSBAND)

~~QUILLY. Just like I said ... confused. You could kill a roach in a corner with the tip of those shoes. (Husband takes off his hat revealing his newly processed hair [a conk]. There is silence.)~~

~~HUSBAND. What's the matter?~~

~~ELIZABETH. I won't go out with you looking like that, Husband.~~

~~HUSBAND. What's wrong?~~

~~QUILLY. You look like a clown!~~

~~HUSBAND. This is what they're wearing. Every place I went with Lou Bessie, the hip cats were wearing this.~~

~~QUILLY. They would be if Lou Bessie took you. And what do you know about some "hip cats?"~~

~~ELIZABETH. Quilly, will you please be quiet. (To Husband.) The suit is bad enough, Husband, but why did you have to mess up your hair?~~

~~HUSBAND. Lou Bessie said....~~

~~ELIZABETH. (Screaming.) I don't want to hear no more about Lou Bessie! (She exits to her bedroom.)~~

~~QUILLY. (Pause.) Ain't no use you standing there looking like Uncle Ben before he started cooking rice.~~

~~HUSBAND. What did I do?~~

~~QUILLY. If you don't know, you need to go on back down in the woods with your old country self, because that's just where you belong. Because if you stay up here, that heifer, Lou Bessie, is going to get you killed or put in jail. And don't let the door knob hit you where the good Lord split you. (Pause.) Why ain't you in the Army with the rest of the boys your age?~~

~~HUSBAND. The Army ain't called me and I ain't going looking for them. I ain't going nowhere to get myself killed for folks who would kill me right here just for wearing the uniform ... no, Ma'am. I believe if they put me between one of those Japanese soldiers and one of those German soldiers and gave most white folks here a gun and told them to shoot, most of them would shoot me.~~

~~QUILLY. Looking like you look, I would too. What does Lou Bessie say?~~

~~HUSBAND. I ain't studying no Lou Bessie.~~

~~QUILLY. Oh, no? Who got you to conk your hair? Who~~

~~dressed you up like a clown? You think Bess wants to go any place with you looking like a runaway from a minstrel show. You asked me what you did, well here's what I think. Used to be, any time things didn't go your way, your mama was there to wipe your tears. Now, Mama's gone and you're up here chas-ing after that old-lazy-good-for-nothing-somebody-of-a-woman and things ain't going right. So, you latch on to my sister ... the Old Settler ... old enough to be your mama, and you two fool each other into thinking it's love.~~

~~HUSBAND. I do love her! Mrs. McGrath, I don't know why you're so against me, but you don't have no cause to say some-thing like that.~~

~~QUILLY. I got cause because that's my sister and I don't want her heart torn from her body. I've seen it done once thirty years ago ... maybe I could have done something about it and maybe not, but I don't want to see it done again.~~

~~HUSBAND. I don't mean Bess no harm.~~

~~QUILLY. I don't think you know what you mean. But I'll tell you this. It may not show. We may fuss a lot, but I love my sis-ter very much. She's done a lot for me. She's all I got in the world. So, if you hurt her, I'll run over you like a truck over a rooster, and that's the God's honest truth. (Elizabeth enters changed into something more conservative.)~~

~~ELIZABETH. Come on, Quilly. We don't want to be late for the Program at church.~~

~~QUILLY. Don't forget the carnations. I've got to change. (Elizabeth gets the box with the carnations as Quilly exits through the hallway.)~~

~~ELIZABETH. Quilly thought to buy you a Mother's Day car-nation. They didn't have three white ones, so you take this one. (She gives Husband a white carnation.) Quilly and I can share the other white one.~~

~~HUSBAND. Thank you.~~

~~ELIZABETH. Don't thank me, thank Quilly.~~

~~HUSBAND. I will then. (Pause.) Bess, I asked you when I first got up here, that if I did anything wrong, that I wanted you to say something or stop me ... and you promised you would. But now you got all put out with me and you won't tell me why.~~