

DAISY. Think what you want. I know the truth.

BOOLIE. The truth is you shouldn't be allowed to drive a car anymore.

DAISY. No.

BOOLIE. Mama, we are just going to have to hire somebody to drive you.

DAISY. No *we* are not. This is my business.

BOOLIE. Your insurance policy is written so that they are going to have to give you a brand new car.

DAISY. Not another Packard, I hope.

BOOLIE. Lord Almighty! Don't you see what I'm saying?

DAISY. Quit talking so ugly to your mother.

BOOLIE. Mama, you are seventy-two years old and you just cost the insurance company twenty-seven hundred dollars. You are a terrible risk. Nobody is going to issue you a policy after this.

DAISY. You're just saying that to be hateful.

BOOLIE. O.K. Yes. Yes I am. I'm making it all up. Every insurance company in America is lined up in the driveway waving their fountain pens and falling all over themselves to get you to sign on. Everybody wants Daisy Werthan, the only woman in the history of driving to demolish a three-week-old Packard, a two-car garage and a freestanding tool shed in one fell swoop!

DAISY. You talk so foolish sometimes, Boolie.

BOOLIE. And even if you could get a policy somewhere, it wouldn't be safe. I'd worry all the time. Look at how many of your friends have men to drive them. Miss Ida Jacobs, Miss Ethel Hess, Aunt Nonie—

DAISY. They're all rich.

BOOLIE. Daddy left you plenty enough for this. I'll do the interviewing at the plant. Oscar in the freight elevator knows every colored man in Atlanta worth talking about. I'm sure in two weeks' time I can find you somebody perfectly—

DAISY. No!

BOOLIE. You won't even have to do anything, Mama. I told you. I'll do all the interviewing, all the reference checking, all the—

DAISY. No. Now stop running your mouth! I am seventy-two years old as you so gallantly reminded me and I am a widow, but unless they rewrote the Constitution and didn't tell me, I still have rights. And one of my rights is the right to invite who I want—not who you want—into my house. You do accept the fact that this is

my house? What I do not want—and absolutely will not have is some— (*She gropes for a bad enough word.*) some chauffeur sitting in my kitchen, gobbling my food, running up my phone bill. Oh, I hate all that in my house!

BOOLIE. You have Idella.

DAISY. Idella is different. She's been coming to me three times a week since you were in the eighth grade and we know how to stay out of each other's way. And even so there are nicks and chips in most of my wedding china and I've seen her throw silver forks in the garbage more than once.

BOOLIE. Do you think Idella has a vendetta against your silverware?

DAISY. Stop being sassy. You know what I mean. I was brought up to do for myself. On Forsyth Street we couldn't afford them and we did for ourselves. That's still the best way, if you ask me.

BOOLIE. Them! You sound like Governor Talmadge.

DAISY. Why, Boolie! What a thing to say! I'm not prejudiced! Aren't you ashamed?

BOOLIE. I've got to go home. Florine'll be having a fit.

DAISY. Y'all must have plans tonight.

BOOLIE. Going to the Ansleys for a dinner party.

DAISY. I see.

BOOLIE. You see what?

DAISY. The Ansleys. I'm sure Florine bought another new dress. This is her idea of heaven on earth, isn't it?

BOOLIE. What?

DAISY. Socializing with Episcopalians.

BOOLIE. You're a doodle, Mama. I guess Aunt Nonie can run you anywhere you need to go for the time being.

DAISY. I'll be fine.

BOOLIE. I'll stop by tomorrow evening.

DAISY. How do you know I'll be here? I'm certainly not dependent on you for company.

BOOLIE. Fine. I'll call first. And I still intend to interview colored men.

DAISY. No!

BOOLIE. Mama!

DAISY. (*Singing to end discussion.*)

After the ball is over.

After the break of morn

After the dancers leaving

After the stars are gone
Many a heart is aching
If you could read them all—

(Lights fade on her as she sings and come up on Boolie at his desk at the Werthan Company. He sits at a desk piled with papers, and speaks into an intercom.)

BOOLIE. O.K., Miss McClatchey. Send him on in. *(He continues working at his desk. Hoke Coleburn enters, a black man of about 60, dressed in a somewhat shiny suit and carrying a fedora, a man clearly down on his luck but anxious to keep up appearances.)* Yes, Hoke isn't it?

HOKE. Yassuh. Hoke Coleburn.

BOOLIE. Have a seat there. I've got to sign these letters. I don't want Miss McClatchey fussing at me.

HOKE. Keep right on with it. I got all the time in the worl'.

BOOLIE. I sec. How long you been out of work?

HOKE. Since back befo' las' November.

BOOLIE. Long time.

HOKE. Well, Mist' Werthan, you try bein' me and looking for work. They hirin' young if they hirin' colored, an' they ain' even hirin' much young, seems like. *(Boolie is involved with his paperwork.)*

Mist' Werthan? Y'all people Jewish, ain' you?

BOOLIE. Yes we are. Why do you ask?

HOKE. I'd druther drive for Jews. People always talkin' bout they stingy and they cheap, but don' say none of that 'roun' me.

BOOLIE. Good to know you feel that way. Now, tell me where you worked before.

HOKE. Yassuh. That what I'm gettin' at. One time I workin' for this woman over near Little Five Points. What was that woman's name? I forget. Anyway, she president of the Ladies Auxilliary over yonder to the Ponce De Leon Baptist Church and seem like she always bringing up God and Jesus and do unto others. You know what I'm talkin' bout?

BOOLIE. I'm not sure. Go on.

HOKE. Well, one day, Mist' Werthan, one day that woman say to me, she say "Hoke, come on back in the back wid me. I got something for you." And we go on back yonder and, Lawd have mercy, she have all these old shirts and collars be on the bed, yellow, you know, and nasty like they been stuck off in a chiffarobe and forgot about. Thass' right. And she say "Ain' they nice? They b'long to my daddy befo' he pass and we fixin' to sell 'em to you for twenty-five cent apiece."

BOOLIE. What was her name?

HOKE. Thass' what I'm thinkin'. What WAS that woman's name? Anyway, as I was goin' on to say, any fool see the whole bunch of them collars and shirts together ain' worth a nickel! Them's the people das callin' Jews cheap! So I say "Yassum, I think about it" and I get me another job fas' as I can.

BOOLIE. Where was that?

HOKE. Mist' Harold Stone, Jewish gentleman jes' like you. Judge, live over yonder on Lullwater Road.

BOOLIE. I knew Judge Stone.

HOKE. You doan' say! He done give me this suit when he finish wid it. An' this necktie too.

BOOLIE. You drove for Judge Stone?

HOKE. Seven years to the day nearabout. An' I be there still if he din' die, and Miz Stone decide to close up the house and move to her people in Savannah. And she say "Come on down to Savannah wid' me, Hoke." Cause my wife dead by then and I say "No thank you." I didn' want to leave my grandbabies and I don' get along with that Geechee trash they got down there.

BOOLIE. Judge Stone was a friend of my father's.

HOKE. You doan' mean! Oscar say you need a driver for yo' family. What I be doin'? Runnin' yo' children to school and yo' wife to the beauty parlor and like dat?

BOOLIE. I don't have any children. But tell me—

HOKE. Thass' a shame! My daughter bes' thing ever happen to me. But you young yet. I wouldn't worry none.

BOOLIE. I won't. Thank you. Did you have a job after Judge Stone?

HOKE. I drove a milk truck for the Avondale Dairy thru the whole war—the one jes' was.

BOOLIE. Hoke, what I'm looking for is somebody to drive my mother around.

HOKE. Excuse me for askin', but how come she ain' hire fo' herseff?

BOOLIE. Well, it's a delicate situation.

HOKE. Mmmm Hmm. She done gone 'roun' the bend a little? That'll happen when they get on.

BOOLIE. Oh no. Nothing like that. She's all there. Too much there is the problem. It just isn't safe for her to drive anymore. She knows it, but she won't admit it. I'll be frank with you. I'm a little desperate.

HOKE. I know what you mean 'bout dat. Once I was outta work my wife said to me "Ooooooh, Hoke, you ain' gon get noun nother