

a job. Let's jes leave it at dat. (*Light out on them and up on Boolie, in his shirtsleeves. He has a phone to his ear.*)

BOOLIE. Good morning, Mama. What's the matter? (*Pause.*) What? Mama, you're talking so fast I... What? All right. All right. I'll come by on my way to work. I'll be there as soon as I can. (*Light out on him and upon Daisy, pacing around her house in a winter bathrobe. Boolie enters in a topcoat and scarf.*) I didn't expect to find you in one piece.

DAISY. I wanted you to be here when he comes. I wanted you to hear it for yourself.

BOOLIE. Hear what? What is going on?

DAISY. He's stealing from me!

BOOLIE. Hoke? Are you sure?

DAISY. I don't make empty accusations. I have proof!

BOOLIE. What proof?

DAISY. This! (*She triumphantly pulls an empty can of salmon out of her robe pocket.*) I caught him red handed! I found this hidden in the garbage pail under some coffee grounds.

BOOLIE. You mean he stole a can of salmon?

DAISY. Here it is! Oh I knew. I knew something was funny. They all take things, you know. So I counted.

BOOLIE. You counted?

DAISY. The silverware first and the linen dinner napkins and then I went into the pantry. I turned on the light and the first thing that caught my eye was a hole behind the corned beef. And I knew right away. There were only eight cans of salmon. I had nine. Three for a dollar on sale.

BOOLIE. Very clever, Mama. You made me miss my breakfast and be late for a meeting at the bank for a thirty-three cent can of salmon. (*He jams his hand in his pocket and pulls out some bills.*) Here! You want thirty-three cents? Here's a dollar! Here's ten dollars! Buy a pantry full of salmon!

DAISY. Why, Boolie! The idea! Waving money at me like I don't know what! I don't want the money. I want my things!

BOOLIE. One can of salmon?

DAISY. It was mine. I bought it and I put it there and he went into my pantry and took it and he never said a word. I leave him plenty of food every day and I always tell him exactly what it is. They are like having little children in the house. They want something so they just take it. Not a smidgin of manners. No conscience. He'll

never admit this. "Nome," he'll say. "I doan know nothin' bout that." And I don't like it! I don't like living this way! I have no privacy.

BOOLIE. Mama!

DAISY. Go ahead. Defend him. You always do.

BOOLIE. All right. I give up. You want to drive yourself again, you just go ahead and arrange it with the insurance company. Take your blessed trolley. Buy yourself an taxicab. Anything you want. Just leave me out of it.

DAISY. Boolie... *(Hoke enters in an overcoat.)*

HOKE. Mornin, Miz Daisy. I b'leve it fixin' to clear up. S'cuse me, I didn't know you was here Mist' Werthan.

BOOLIE. Hoke, I think we have to have a talk.

HOKE. Jes' a minute. Lemme put my coat away. I be right back. *(He pulls a brown paper bag out of his overcoat.)* Oh, Miz Daisy. Yestiddy when you out with yo' sister I ate a can o' your salmon. I know you say eat the leff over pork chops, but they stiff. Here, I done buy you another can. You want me to put it in the pantry fo you?

DAISY. Yes. Thank you, Hoke.

HOKE. I'll be right wit you Mist' Werthan. *(Hoke exits. Daisy looks at the empty can in her hand.)*

DAISY. *(Trying for dignity.)* I've got to get dressed now. Goodbye, son. *(She pecks his cheek and exits. Lights out on him. We hear sounds of birds twittering. Lights come up, brightly-hot sun. Daisy, in light dress, is kneeling, a trowel in her hand, working by a gravestone. Hoke, jacket in hand, sleeves rolled up, stands nearby.)*

HOKE. I jess thinkin', Miz Daisy. We bin out heah to the cemetary three times dis mont already and ain' even the twentieth yet.

DAISY. It's good to come in nice weather.

HOKE. Yassum. Mist' Sig's grave mighty well tended. I b'leve you the best widow in the state of Georgia.

DAISY. Boolie's always pestering me to let the staff out here tend to this plot. Perpetual care they call it.

HOKE. Doan' you do it. It right to have somebody from the family lookin' after you.

DAISY. I'll certainly never have that. Boolie will have me in perpetual care before I'm cold.

HOKE. Come on now, Miz Daisy.

DAISY. Hoke, run back to the car and get that pot of azaleas for me and set it on Leo Bauer's grave.

HOKE. Miz Rose Bauer's husband?