

DAISY. Boolie, if you don't want to go, why don't you just come right out and say so?

BOOLIE. I want to go. You know how I feel about him.

DAISY. Of course, but Florine—

BOOLIE. Florine has nothing to do with it. I still have to conduct business in this town.

DAISY. I see. The Werthan Company will go out of business if you attend the King dinner?

BOOLIE. Not exactly. But a lot of the men I do business with wouldn't like it. They wouldn't come right out and say so. They'd just snicker and call me Martin Luther Werthan behind my back—something like that. And I'd begin to notice that my banking business wasn't being handled by the top dogs. Maybe I'd start to miss out on a few special favors, a few tips. I wouldn't hear about certain lunch meetings at the Commerce Club. Little things you can't quite put your finger on. And Jack Raphael over at Ideal Press, he's a New York Jew instead of a Georgia Jew and as long as you got to deal with Jews, the really smart ones come from New York, don't they? So some of the boys might start throwing business to Jack instead of ole Martin Luther Werthan. I don't know. Maybe it wouldn't happen, but that's the way it works. If we don't use those seats, somebody else will and the good Doctor King will never know the difference, will he?

DAISY. If we don't use the seats? I'm not supposed to go either?

BOOLIE. Mama, you can do whatever you want.

DAISY. Thanks for your permission.

BOOLIE. Can I ask you something? When did you get so fired up about Martin Luther King? Time was, I'd have heard a different story.

DAISY. Why, Boolie! I've never been prejudiced and you know it!

BOOLIE. Okay. Why don't you ask Hoke to go to the dinner with you?

DAISY. Hoke? Don't be ridiculous. He wouldn't go.

BOOLIE. Ask him and see. *(Boolie exits. Daisy puts on an evening wrap and chiffon scarf over her hair. This is not done quickly. She moves slowly. When she is ready, Hoke enters and helps her into the car. They ride in silence for a moment.)*

DAISY. I don't know why you still drive. You can't see.

HOKE. Yassum I can.

DAISY. You didn't see that mailbox.

HOKE. How you know what I didn't see?

DAISY. It nearly poked through my window. This car is all scratched up.

HOKE. Ain' no sucha thing.

DAISY. How would you know? You can't see. What a shame. It's a bran' new car, too.

HOKE. You got this car two years come March.

DAISY. You forgot to turn.

HOKE. Ain' this dinner at the Biltmo'?

DAISY. You know it is.

HOKE. Biltmo' straight thissaway.

DAISY. You know so much.

HOKE. Yassum. I do.

DAISY. I've lived in Atlanta all my life.

HOKE. And ain' run a car in onto twenty years. (*A beat.*)

DAISY. Boolie said the silliest thing the other day.

HOKE. Tha' right?

DAISY. He's too old to be so foolish.

HOKE. Yassum. What did he say?

DAISY. Oh, he was talking about Martin Luther King. (*A beat.*) I guess you know him, don't you?

HOKE. Martin Luther King? Nome.

DAISY. I was sure you did. But you've heard him preach?

HOKE. Same way as you—over the TV.

DAISY. I think he's wonderful.

HOKE. Yassum.

DAISY. You know, you could go see him in person any time you wanted. (*No response.*) All you'd have to do is go over there to the—what is it?

HOKE. Ebenezer.

DAISY. Ebenezer Baptist Church some Sunday and there he'll be.

HOKE. What you gettin' at, Miz Daisy?

DAISY. Well, it's so silly. Boolie said you wanted to go to this dinner with me tonight. Did you tell him that?

HOKE. Nome.

DAISY. I didn't think so. What would be the point? You can hear him anytime—whenever you want.

HOKE. You want the front do' or the side do' to the Biltmore?

DAISY. I think the side. Isn't it wonderful the way things are changing?

HOKE. What you think I am, Miz Daisy?

DAISY. What do you mean?
HOKE. You think I some somethin' sittin' up here doan' know nothin' bout how to do?
DAISY. I don't know what you're talking about.
HOKE. Invitation to disheah dinner come in the mail a mont' ago. Did be you want me to go wid you, how come you wait till we in the car on the way to ask me?
DAISY. What? All I said was that Boolie said you wanted to go.
HOKE. (*Sulking.*) Mmm Hmmm.
DAISY. You know you're welcome to come, Hoke.
HOKE. Mmmm Hmmm.
DAISY. Oh my stars. Well, aren't you a great big baby!
HOKE. Nevermind baby, next time you ask me someplace, ask me regular.
DAISY. You don't have to carry on so much!
HOKE. Das' all. Less drop it.
DAISY. Honestly!
HOKE. Things changin', but they ain't change all dat much. (*They are at the door.*) I hep you to the do'.
DAISY. Thank you, Hoke. I can help myself. (*Daisy gets herself out of the car, which takes some effort. Hoke sits still in his seat. Daisy looks at him when she is out of the car, but thinks better of what she was going to say and walks slowly towards the door. Lights out on them and up on Boolie at his house.*)
BOOLIE. (*On the phone.*) Hello, Hoke? How are you?
HOKE. I'm tolerable, Mist' Werthan.
BOOLIE. What can I do for you this morning?
HOKE. It yo' Mama.
BOOLIE. What's the matter?
HOKE. She worked up.
BOOLIE. Why should today be different from any other day?
HOKE. No, this ain' the same.
DAISY. (*Offstage.*) Hoke?
HOKE. Yassum? (*Back to phone.*) She think she teachin' school. I'm real worried 'bout her. She ain' makin' sense.
BOOLIE. I'll be right there. (*Lights out on Boolie. He exits. Daisy enters. She is in disarray. Her hair is not combed and her housecoat is open, the slip showing underneath.*)
DAISY. Hoke? Hoke?
HOKE. Yassum?