

AUNT ESTER: What you doing making all that noise out here?
I smell pigfeet. Black Mary, put me on a pot of tea. Eli, see if you can get that stove in there to work. I don't know what it is. Seem like I be cold all the time.

ELI: You ain't getting sick is you?

AUNT ESTER: I ain't said I was sick I'm just cold. I don't know what it is.

(Eli exits into Aunt Ester's room.)

SOLLY: I brought you some pure.

AUNT ESTER: Black Mary, see what he got there.

SOLLY: I got a little bit of everything. Got some thirty-day. Got some sixty-day.

AUNT ESTER: See what it look like, Black Mary.

(Black Mary takes one of the bags and opens it and looks inside.)

You can't tell nothing by looking at it. Bring it here! How you gonna be scared of dog shit? That's all it is.

BLACK MARY: I ain't said I was scared of it.

AUNT ESTER: Bring it here!

(Black Mary takes her the bag. Aunt Ester breaks open a piece of pure and empties it in her hand.)

Look at that. God made that! Ain't nothing in God's creation that ain't good. Look at that. See he ain't been eating nothing but bone. Give me some of this, Solly. What else you got?

(Black Mary exits up the stairs.)

SOLLY: There's a Great Dane up on Arcena Street. I been trying to get some of that but he don't never let him out. Great big old dog. Look like a small horse.

AUNT ESTER: They say that helps with tomatoes. But I'll be satisfied with this.

(She takes some coins out of a small purse and gives them to Solly.)

I don't know what got in that child. Seem like she don't want to learn nothing.

SOLLY: Black Mary stubborn. Her and Caesar just alike. Only she ain't got his evilness. But she got everything else. They say the apple don't fall too far from the tree. But sometime it fall far enough. That's the difference between her and Caesar. The apple fell and then it rolled a little bit.

(Black Mary enters carrying her purse.)

BLACK MARY: I'm going shopping.

AUNT ESTER: I thought you was gonna do the laundry.

BLACK MARY: I got to go down on Logan Street.

AUNT ESTER: It ain't like it's gonna do itself. You got to plan better. I told you the key is to plan. You plan right you can unlock any door. You got to run down on Logan Street and do the laundry. You got to do both.

BLACK MARY: I ain't say I wasn't gonna do it. I said I'm going out now.

(Black Mary exits.)

Start

AUNT ESTER: She running down there to see Percy Saunders. I know where she going. She used to go see Percy Saunders and Robert Smiley. I done told her the people gonna throw stones at her.

SOLLY: You can't keep a man and a woman apart. They was made for each other. That's what I'm trying to tell you. Every time I see you it make me feel good.

AUNT ESTER: You tell that to all the women. They say you got one on every street. You must not have none on Wylie Avenue.

SOLLY: I got two! One for each arm. Everybody know that. But what they don't know is I don't want that no more. You the only one know that. You the only one need to know. I been blessed. You know how they say count your blessings? I can't count that far. I never did live my life for a woman. That's one blessing I ain't had. I'm never in one place long enough. If I lived life for a woman I couldn't live it for the people. The Bible say you can't serve two masters.

AUNT ESTER: Come on and let's get married. You always talking about getting married. I done had four husbands I might as well have five. I'm trying to catch up with Black Mary. She told me she had seventeen husbands.

SOLLY: Black Mary ain't had no husbands. She too stubborn.

AUNT ESTER: She had seventeen rings and I give her a dime for each one of them. That was in a dream I had about Black Mary before I known her. I had that dream and the next day Black Mary knocked on the door and asked me if I had any laundry that needed washing. I told her to go upstairs and make up that bed 'cause anybody willing to do laundry was welcome to stay here. That's three years ago. She been here ever since. I had a dream about you last night.

SOLLY: My dreams won't stay in one place long enough for me to remember them.

AUNT ESTER: I dreamed you had a ship full of men and you was coming across the water. Had that stick and you was standing up in this boat full of men. You come and asked me what I was doing standing there. I told you I wanted to go back across the ocean. I asked you to take me. You said you had some work to do but that you would come back. Told me you had a magic stick and when you come back you would part the water so I could walk across. You come on back and all your men had drowned and the boat was sinking. You said you was going to get another boat and some more men. Said you would come back and smote the water. Then you walked off with that stick. Said you was going to Alabama.

SOLLY: I just got a letter from my sister today. I got to go! She say she can't hold on no more. Say the white people have gone crazy. I got to go back down there to get her. Eli say he staying here with you. But I got to go get my sister. This my last trip. I'm getting old. I can't do more than one more. I don't know what I'm gonna do then. I was thinking about living my life for you. But I got to go back down there and get my sister.

(Eli enters from Aunt Ester's room.)

ELI: I got that stove working. Just leave it set like it is. If it get too hot in there let me know.

(Eli goes to the coat rack to get his coat and hat.)

Solly, you ready to go down to Garret Brown's funeral?

(Solly goes to get his coat and hat.)

AUNT ESTER: Come on back and get some of these pigfeet.

SOLLY: I want more than pigfeet. But I don't think you gonna give me none.

AUNT ESTER: Go on you old rascal you!

END

(Solly and Eli exit. The lights go down on the scene.)

SCENE 2

The lights come up on the parlor. Citizen Barlow enters from the upstairs window. There is a knock on the door. No one answers. Another knock. Silence. Citizen enters from upstairs. Hungry, he heads straight for the kitchen and finds the bread box. He grabs a piece of bread, stuffs it in his mouth, grabs another piece, stuffs it in his pocket. He looks around for something else to eat when Aunt Ester enters from her room.