

"The best faith is in yourself even though God do have a hand in it." That's all.

BLACK MARY: How you want to sign it?

SOLLY: "Your brother, Two Kings."

(Aunt Ester enters and goes and sits in her chair.)

AUNT ESTER: I thought that was you out here. Where's Mr. Citizen?

ELI: He out back. I got him working on that wall.

AUNT ESTER: See if he want something to eat.

(Eli exits out back.)

Black Mary, you got something for Mr. Citizen to eat? When you leaving, Solly?

SOLLY: I went down to see Butera and got me some new boots. Jefferson Culpepper can't go. He got the consumption. Soon as I break in these boots I got to go.

(Eli and Citizen enter. Citizen and Black Mary stare at each other.)

AUNT ESTER: Good morning, Mr. Citizen. Did you sleep all right?

CITIZEN: I slept good. Yeah.

AUNT ESTER: I want you to meet somebody. That there is Solly. That's Citizen Barlow. Mr. Citizen remind me of my June-bug.

(Aunt Ester and Black Mary exit out back.)

START

SOLLY: My name is Two Kings. Used to be Uncle Alfred. The government looking for me for being a runaway so I changed it.

CITIZEN: My mama named me Citizen after freedom came. She wouldn't like it if I changed my name.

SOLLY: Your mama's trying to tell you something. She put a heavy load on you. It's hard to be a citizen. You gonna have to fight to get that. And time you get it you be surprised how heavy it is. I used to be called Uncle Alfred back in slavery. I ran into one fellow called me Uncle Alfred. I told him say, "Uncle Alfred dead." He say, "I'm looking at you." I told him, "You looking at Two Kings. That's David and Solomon." He must have had something in his ear 'cause all he heard is Solomon. He say, "I'm gonna call you Solly." The people been calling me Solly ever since. But my name is Two Kings. Some people call me Solomon and some people call me David. I answer to either one. I don't know which one God gonna call me. If he call me Uncle Alfred then we got a big fight.

CITIZEN: You got that stick. My daddy used to carry a stick like that. My daddy carried a stick everywhere he went. If you see my daddy he'd have his stick.

SOLLY: Lots of people carry sticks. Ain't you never heard that "sticks and stones can break my bones but names can never hurt me." This a bone breaker. I tried carrying stones but they was too heavy. I seen a hundred men carry sticks. My daddy carried a stick. He had to fight to carry it. I don't know if them hundred men had to fight but they was carrying them just the same. Why don't you carry one?

CITIZEN: I got my knife.

SOLLY: I got a knife too. Knives is for killing. I thank God I ain't never had to kill nobody. I come close a couple of times. This old gal took a liking to me and her man come after me one time. That's as close as I ever come to killing somebody. I busted him up pretty bad with my stick and she asked me to stop 'cause he was paying her rent and she needed that. Get you a stick and it'll save you a lot of trouble. Where you from?

CITIZEN: Alabama. Down around Opelika.

SOLLY: I'm from Alabama too. They got some good people down there. I been to Opelika. I been all over. I been clear

down to the Gulf of Mexico. All through Louisiana and up into Canada. I first set foot in Canada in 1857. I'm going down to Alabama to get my sister. You ought to come and go to Alabama with me. I need a strong man like you. Get you one of these bone breakers and let's go down there and help the people get away.

CITIZEN: I just left. If I go back with you I'll just have to turn around and come back. I'm up here looking for a job. Ain't no jobs down there.

SOLLY: The people think they in freedom. That's all my daddy talked about. He died and never did have it. I say I got it but what is it? I'm still trying to find out. It ain't never been nothing but trouble.

ELI: Freedom is what you make it.

SOLLY: That's what I'm saying. You got to fight to make it mean something. All it mean is you got a long row to hoe and ain't got no plow. Ain't got no seed. Ain't got no mule. What good is freedom if you can't do nothing with it? I seen many a man die for freedom but he didn't know what he was getting. If he had known he might have thought twice about it.

(Black Mary enters.)

END

BLACK MARY: You want a bowl of beans, Solly?

SOLLY: What kind is they? I had a couple of old gals try and poison me. With this one gal the doctor told me I was lucky. Say if I had eaten another bite I would have died. Good thing she couldn't cook. I was just eating to be polite.

BLACK MARY: They baby lima beans cooked up with some ham hocks.

SOLLY: I can't eat no lima beans. They belly busters. But I can eat baby lima beans. They agree with me a little better.

(Black Mary sets a bowl of lima beans in front of Solly.)

ELI: When I was a boy we used to say a little rhyme.

Beans beans the musical fruit
The more you eat the more you toot
The more you toot the better you feel
So have those beans at every meal.

SOLLY: Them big lima beans tell the truth about that. Hey Black Mary, I got another pair of pants and a shirt that needs washing. I ain't got but a dime.

BLACK MARY: Where's all these dollars you be getting from selling that dog shit. Come in here the other day bragging about it.

SOLLY: I'll give you fifteen cents. I just bought a new pair of shoes.

(Black Mary sets a bowl of lima beans and cornbread in front of Citizen.)

If I had the fifteen cents I'd give it to you. I try to do the right thing. I always wanna be on the right side. But sometimes I don't know what side that is. They say, "God have planned but the devil have planned also."

BLACK MARY: God ain't never wrong.

SOLLY: God say different things. Say, "I will smite my enemies." Then he tell you to, "Turn the other cheek." That don't get you nothing but two broke jaws.

BLACK MARY: You wanna be like God. Everything that's for him ain't for you. That's why God threw Lucifer out of heaven.

SOLLY: That's what I'm saying. Lucifer was God's enemy. God ain't turned the other cheek. He picked Lucifer up and threw him down into hell.

BLACK MARY: The Bible say, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

SOLLY: God ain't done that! He didn't want Lucifer to throw *him* out of heaven. He wanted Lucifer to bow down and pledge obedience. That's what he would have Lucifer do unto him. He wasn't gonna bow down and pledge obedience to Lucifer.