

BENNIE SIDES

Bo exits.

BENNIE

That Boudreaux Doucet is one cool drink of water on a hot day. And it sure be hot today!

MARGARET

If you like that kind of thing.

BENNIE

Then I must like that kinda thing. Whew! Mizz Margaret, how come you never look at Bo the way he look at you?

MARGARET

I don't know what you're talking about.

BENNIE

Bother you don't. That man been hankerin like he is a starvin dog and you is a danglin poke chop. Oh shoot ... poke chops. Cain't tell me you didn't get a little trembley by him just now. Don't you be lyin to family.

MARGARET

Bennie, I haven't met a man south of Richmond who doesn't drool over anything wearing a skirt. One local hound being puppy sick does not flatter me. You want him, keep him for yourself and let me get back to work. And we aren't family, much as you feel sisterly.

BENNIE

Fine, you grumpy, then. Look, my Mama done took the family stories with her when she left—my great gamma could be Spanish from one island or another, her granddaddy proolly some kinda pirate. Even my Daddy don't know who's what or what's who. Not that he care, lest his supper late. So you my people, just as much as anybody, maybe more.

MARGARET

Mama was talking about how kind you've been since she got sick. She loves you dearly. I wish you'd be a little more ... discriminating in who you step out with.

BENNIE

It ain't the steppin I'm interested in, it's what happens when the steppin stops, and the lights go down... come on, Maggie, ain't you never dreamed about a man?

MARGARET

I had a man. Surprises me, too. I was living with four other women in an apartment the size of that sink, doing secretarial work, wasting my education. And like every Cary Grant movie you've ever seen, I fell in love with my boss.

BENNIE

That don't sound too bad if he return the favor.

MARGARET

Wasn't any favor. I was trying to be this sophisticated city lady, all he saw was a farm girl he could play with. And he was dead right. When I said I needed to come back here to help Mama, he gave my job to someone else, right in front of me, some dolly I'm sure replaced me in all of my positions. Oh, he was a real gentleman, offered me bus fare and everything.

BENNIE

Did you take it?

MARGARET

No!

BENNIE

Too bad, I was gonna borrow it for the movies. Don't trouble yourself about who does for me, I take care of myself. One thing I learned from my Daddy, it's the hurtin that comes from a balled-up fist. And I learn that lesson every day. Mostly them boys is kind enough, and I like the attention, makes me feel like I got somethin worth offerin. There ain't nothin quite as pretty as a man when he is rampant.

MARGARET

(uncomfortably)

This conversation is going places I'd rather not visit with you, child. Listen, we have to get the extra leaf for the table. You want to help me, or stay here and moon around for your boyfriend Bo?

BENNIE

Both.

They leave.

Ty stick