

KATE. God no, not about men. I always felt as soon as I got close to a man, I started to shrink. And if I ever said "I do", I'd disappear.

TOOD. Don't you ever need a man? Want a man?  
KATE. Two separate things. I suppose I get as much as I want.

TOOD. I see.

*(PHONE rings inside. WEETSIE answers phone silently.)*

KATE. Besides you don't get any points for being independent. You get sweet little things like "spinster", "old maid", and worse.

TOOD. Yeah, but you have a say in what you do.

KATE. Yeah, me, Harry Luce, and my mother. *(Laughs)*

*(WEETSIE comes to the door.)*

WEETSIE. It's for you, Mrs. Miller.

KATE. Oh, thanks. By the way, why don't you call me "Kate"?

WEETSIE. Oh, I don't think I could do that. My mamma would shoot me if she knew I called an older woman by her first name.

*(She goes back inside.)*

KATE. *(To TOOD)* Well, on that note.

*(They both laugh.)*

*(KATE goes to phone, speaks silently. The lights on the house are dim. It has turned to dusk. TOOD "writes" a letter to TOMMY. Lights come up on TOMMY reading it.)*

SIDE 11 - TOOD, Tommy

START

TOOD. *(Long pause)* Dear Tommy. I was talkin' to the woman from *Life* today. She sure can ask the questions. And I answer every one of them as honestly as I can. Oh, Tommy, she's so ... unusual. Funny. She's a good listener. She wanted to know all about my family before I was a Cliffert. She actually wants to know about me.

TOMMY. *(Matter-of-factly)* Tood, do you love me? Really love me?

TOOD. So I was tellin' her about my brothers and my daddy. You know, that I don't remember too much about him. I wonder if I have any of him in me? And how much of him do my brothers have. They was all so little when he died, and they grew up without a daddy, and I wonder what that has to do with their drinkin' and all. I told Kate I thought they must be *incomplete* ... somehow. *(Pause)* Oh, Tommy, all my letters to you is so easy soundin' ...

TOMMY. Your letters have all started soundin' crazy to me.

TOOD. ... and I don't want this letter to upset you ...

TOMMY. They scare me.

TOOD. ... because ... it might not be so easy.

TOMMY. They make me think you don't believe in me.

TOOD. But, I think I am finally sendin' you a love letter. A real love letter. About real love. And it frightens me.

TOMMY. What would I do without you, Tood? I try. I try to be what you want. You always say I got so much of Mamma in me. And I'm afraid I got too much.

TOOD. Oh, Tommy, I don't want this baby here inside of me to be incomplete. It'll be half of both of us, right? And I don't mean our blood and stuff. I mean our souls.

TOMMY. It ain't easy bein' the baby. With nothin' but older brothers callin' you Teat. Like you was a runt.

*(Pleading, almost in tears)* As long as I can remember, I wanted to not be Teat.

TOOD. I look at that empty field next to your mamma's house, knowin' that you dream of buildin' a house right there. *Right next door.* And sometimes I get so mad at that half-acre, I could scream. I even throw rocks at it sometimes! Is that why my knuckles is raw from washin' other people's underwear — to build *that* house? Or for the damned Clifft Brothers' Bait and Tackle Company? *Lloyd's* Bait and Tackle Company — that's what it'll be *and you know it.*

TOMMY. The bait and tackle company is my chance to be a man in this family! Tood, what is wrong with wantin' that? What's wrong with my kind of dreamin'?

*(LIGHTS fade on TOMMY.)*

TOOD. *(Screaming in anguish)* I DON'T WANT TO DIG WORKS FOR LLOYD WHEN YOU COME HOME! *(Broken, frightened)* All I want is a *say*. In my own life. What is wrong with my kind of dreamin'?

*(LIGHTS fade on TOOD.)*

END

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT II

### Scene Twelve

*(The top of Red Hill, on the outskirts of Sterlington. TOOD is discovered. She is sitting alone, looking out. KATE enters, carrying a picnic basket.)*

TOOD. Hey. You found it.

KATE. Addie Mae found it. I got into the car and said, "The lookout on Red Hill and step on it." Just like a cab in New York. Between the two of you, I've seen a whole lot of North Louisiana in the last couple of weeks. *(Pause, looking at the terrain)* So. Here I am. Red Hill.

TOOD. They call it Red Hill 'cause there ain't nothin' around here for miles except red clay.

KATE. Oh, it's pretty up here. I didn't realize you had hills this high.

TOOD. This is the highest point in Morehouse Parish. You can see almost all the way to Mer Rouge. *(Pronounced: ma ROOJ.)*

KATE. Mer Rouge? *(Realizes it is French)* As in *(With a French accent)* mer rouge? Meaning the Red Sea? From the Bible? *(Looks out)* Wouldn't you know.

TOOD. Is that what it means? Huh. All this time it was just Mer Rouge to me. I knew it meant something, but ... Huh. That's pitiful, ain't it? I been comin' up here since I was a youngun' and I didn't even know where I was. The Red Sea. *(Looks out in amazement.)*