

KATE. *(Eating some of the cake)* Well, I figured I couldn't pass up the opportunity to really get to know everyone. And I don't think I could take long stretches of Addie Mae.

TOOD. *(Light laugh)* She's a piece of work, ain't she? *(Catching herself)* Oh, she's nice and all, and she does a lot of good for people and stuff.

KATE. *(Smiles)* I know what you mean.

TOOD. Aunt Ola thinks she's too uppity and talks too much. One time she said if Addie Mae didn't shut up, she was gonna split her tongue and run her leg through it. *(There is a moment of absolute silence as the statement sinks in to KATE. Then a shared laugh)* There I go being colorful again.

*(WEETSIE enters, obviously angry. She doesn't see KATE. Through the following scene TOOD tries to regain control. WEETSIE and SYBIL overlap each other's dialogue.)*

WEETSIE. Toood, why can't you let well enough alone? I just come from Lloyd and what he told me was bad enough, but then I go into Bickley's Drug Store to pick up a prescription for Mamma. And there is Sybil, puttin' on lipstick from one of the displays - and I ain't talkin' no free-sample either. And Mr. Bickley is havin' a hissy fit, and Sybil is tellin' him it's good advertisement for the store. That, on top of you ...

TOOD. *(Trying to "cover")* What is the matter with you, Weetsie?

WEETSIE. Why in Jesus' sweet name are you sendin' Teat all this mess about movin'?

*(SYBIL bursts in, not seeing KATE.)*

SYBIL. Weetsie Clifert, I thought Toood was the ignorant hick around here. But you - *(To TOOD)* She was screamin' at me in the middle of Bickley's Drug Store.

TOOD. *(Humiliated. KATE is amused by it all)* Weetsie, Sybil, don't do this.

SYBIL. Screamin'. Like a stuck hog.

WEETSIE. *(To SYBIL)* You're pitiful.

SYBIL. A big ol' fat stuck hog.

WEETSIE. *(Back to TOOD)* Ain't you ever heard of family, Toood? This is a good one. Why you got to mess it up. SYBIL. *(To TOOD)* It's all perfectly logical. Old man Bickley don't let you sample nothin' before you buy it. *(Back to WEETSIE)* What happens if you get the wrong shade? You know I can't eat lipstick. You want a reason to get in a moral outrage ... *(SYBIL sees KATE and after a moment senses who she is. WEETSIE turns to see KATE)* Oh shit. *(To KATE)* Hey, I promise I didn't get this red face at Bickley's Drug Store. *(Extends hand to KATE, trying to make a good impression)* I'm Sybil.

KATE. How do you do? I'm Kate Miller. *(Pause)* From Life magazine.

*(WEETSIE is humiliated, and faints.)*

*(BLACKOUT)*

SCENE

Scene Eight

*(AUNT OLA is sitting on the porch, snapping beans. KATE enters, carrying her camera.)*

AUNT OLA. *(Observing KATE)* Addie Mae takin' you on another whirlwind tour of North Louisiana?

KATE. Yes. Today it's crayfish and palmetto fans. (*AUNT OLA smiles*) Whatever did you put in that iced tea last night? It must have been drugged for me to sleep like that.

AUNT OLA. It's that old attic fan, just hulls you right out.

KATE. (*Observes AUNT OLA for a moment and then picks up snapped bean*) All these years I thought they grew that way.

AUNT OLA. (*Chuckles*) Uh-huh. And you the big, smart reporter for *Life* magazine?

KATE. Well, come on, Aunt Ola, give me a break. The only thing I use my kitchen for is to water my plants.

AUNT OLA. (*Chuckles. Pause, amazed*) You live by yourself in New York City?

KATE. (*Amused*) I do.

AUNT OLA. Lord, I can't even imagine that.

KATE. You might surprise yourself.

AUNT OLA. Oh lord, I ain't got the heart for any more surprises in my life. Kate, are my boys really on their way home?

KATE. Yep. There's some delay with Johnny, but he'll make it.

AUNT OLA. Just like that.

KATE. Just like that. Are you excited about seeing your boys?

AUNT OLA. They'll get to see their daddy alive. I'm excited about that.

KATE. Oh, I'm sorry, Aunt Ola. I didn't realize ... What will you do?

AUNT OLA. Same old, same old. Ain't much choice about that.

ADDIE MAE. Yoo-hoo!

AUNT OLA. (*Laughs, enjoying KATE*) Well, don't let Addie Mae wear you out. Poor old Sonny ain't breathed a relaxin' breath since the day they got married.

(*ADDIE MAE enters, approaches porch.*)

ADDIE MAE. (*Admiring KATE*) My goodness, you are just a glory this mornin'! A mornin' glory! Ain't that right, Aunt Ola?

AUNT OLA. Well, I was tellin' her the very same thing when you walked up.

ADDIE MAE. Well, I'd love to sit around and talk all mornin' (*AUNT OLA looks mischievously at KATE*) but, lord, I got a list of things to show Kate as long as my arm. (*To KATE*) You know you said you wanted background, and background you gonna get! Come on! (*Starts to leave, notices KATE is not right behind her, turns, and with more authority*) Come on!

KATE. (*Smiling*) O.K., let's go. (*TOOD comes out of the house*) Toood, I'll be back later.

(*AUNT OLA goes back to snapping beans. TOOD watches where KATE has gone. After a moment.*)

TOOD. She's something ain't she. (*AUNT OLA smiles, looks at TOOD, who is pensive, looking away*) Aunt Ola?

AUNT OLA. (*Knowing something is on TOOD's mind*) Here grab some of these beans.

(*TOOD takes some beans in her apron and starts snapping them. Quiet.*)

TOOD. How is Uncle Tom?

AUNT OLA. Well, Dr. Pollard said he ain't pinched a nurse in three days, so I figure he must be about dead. (*They laugh at this*) What absolutely amazes me is that one of them nurses air't pulled the plug on that old fart. (*More laughter*)