

met everyone. Alberga, Syd, my boys, and Millie - my first female friend.

(She moves to ALBERGA, in Jack's.)

ALBERGA. Friends are important.

(Beat.)

Your glass is empty.

TONI. Yes. It is.

ALBERGA. Why don't you do a little Charleston Slide with me then? Band's nice tonight.

TONI. I don't dance. Besides, you aren't afraid people will think you funny? You know, a little pansy, bein' with a girl who always dresses like a man and looks like a twelve-year-old boy?

ALBERGA. You're a grown-ass woman, Toni Stone.

TONI. Thirty-three.

MILLIE. Lord, Tony! Don't tell a man your age!

TONI. I tell coaches I'm twenty-three...

ALBERGA. I'm sixty-eight. Tell women I'm forty-seven.

TONI. Why would you do that?

ALBERGA. *(Amused.)* It doesn't matter. I don't know what people are looking at if they look at you and see boy. I only see woman.

MILLIE. He's good.

TONI. *(To MILLIE.)* Since you aren't here right now, could you be quiet please?

(MILLIE's light goes out.)

I'm not good at these things Alberga.

(Pulling back.) Other day this girl who works behind the counter was talkin' sweet to me...and just like with you...I didn't know it...but when she explained it to me, it didn't make me feel nothin' but maybe a little flattered.

ALBERGA. All of that is arbitrary. You and I have all of the time in the world to work all of this out.

TONI. I do like the way you speak Aury.

(ALBERGA moves in, gingerly, for a kiss. TONI pulls back a little, instinctively.)

ALBERGA. Just make like you the bat and I'm a ball comin' at it slow.

(TONI leans into the kiss. It is sweet, tentative, and short.)

TONI. Buck Leonard -

ALBERGA. Bats left, throws left...

TONI. How you -

ALBERGA. I know things too sometimes.

TONI. Do you know how many hits he scored last season?

ALBERGA. *(Accepting.)* No Toni, how many?

TONI. Sixty, double that if you add in barnstorming and exhibition games.

ALBERGA. So again... *(Gesturing to glass.)* What'll you have?

TONI. Just 'cause I let you kiss me doesn't mean I can't get my own drinks.

MILLIE. Good Lord Toni, the man jess wants to take care of you a little.

TONI. Then he needs to say what he means. And I take care of myself just fine.

(Beat.)

(To ALBERGA.) Fine then. You may buy me a drink if you like. Because I know that is important to you. But, don't think just because I allow you to refresh my beverage from time to time I can't take care of myself. That's what I do. I take care of myself.

(PLAYERS begin to transform the stage into a steel mill.)

(To audience.) Always was able to find ways to take care of myself. Even once I was playing for the Clowns, money was tight and we all still had to find ways to scrape through during the off-season.