

(LUANNE watches SARA clean around the desk. SARA moves to the curtains to make herself less obvious. Picks up specks of dust.)

LUANNE. He likes when you iron the curtains. Gon' have to take 'em down and steam 'em out back.

SARA. I'll get to that later.

LUANNE. And the desk drawers creak if you don't put some oil to 'em. He get real perturbed by the creakin'.

SARA. Thanks for the tips.

LUANNE. Just want you to do a good job. Lots of rewards for good jobs. Might get you a extra biscuit for supper.

SARA. (*Sarcasm.*) Well that'll make the whole thing worth it.

(*A pause. LUANNE studies SARA.*)

LUANNE. Where she got you sleeping?

SARA. Pardon me?

LUANNE. You sleeping here in the big house? Or she put you back in the field after supper?

SARA. I sleep in the straw bed I done always slept in. Back in my cabin.

LUANNE. Well I guess they can't have two of us darkies in the big house overnight. Probably makes 'em too anxious.

SARA. You sleep here in the big house?

LUANNE. Since few days ago. Master improved my conditions.

SARA. I'll bet he did.

LUANNE. It's good to see a friend in here, Sara. Ain't none of these other kitchen-hands nice to me at all. You'd think they done plumb forgot we all slave kin. But tha's how it go, I guess. Envy ain't never been good for the soul.

SARA. LuAnne, who in they rightful mind got envy for you?

LUANNE. What you meanin' by that?

SARA. You a slave from the field who keep Master's bed warm and done worked yo' way into a full-time position at it. Who you figure wanna trade places? I think you gon' be a undisputed champ on that one.

LUANNE. Don't be ugly to me Sara. You ugly enough as it is without doin' nothin' extra.

SARA. Seem to me ugly is preferable. Pretty is the last thing I want Master to think of me. But that's just my guess from the outside lookin' in.

LUANNE. Why you gotta be mean and hateful? I was trying to be pleasant witcha. Even though you taken my tasks and get me reassigned behind my back.

SARA. I ain't get you reassigned. I done already told you that's Missy Sue.

LUANNE. Oh everybody know Missy Sue do whatever you say. We seein' the way she look at you.

SARA. (*Intrigued.*) Lookin' at me? What you talkin' about?

LUANNE. Like the way a woman look at her husband who done come back for her with his freedom papers in his hand. I seen that only one time in my life and the feeling it gave me was like happiness and passion and excitement all in one. Like if that woman ain't run into that man's arms and jump his bones right there, I'da did it for her. And that look...that's what Missy Sue give you.

SARA. You talk crazier than a slave with the fever.

LUANNE. She got fever for you. I seen it.

(*SARA is intrigued again. Is this possible?*)

SARA. That ain't even part of our nature. It like...we ain't s'posed to even think like that.

Start

(LUANNE *sniffs* SARA's *curiosity*.)

LUANNE. Nature ain't no slave. It move to its own rhythm. Ain't you never been tempted by that rhythm, Sara?

SARA. The good book tell you what rhythm to move by.

LUANNE. Nature don't care 'bout yo' good book. Nature its own god. I done felt a nature that no words can describe. I bet not even yo' good book could translate it.

SARA. I'm pretty sho it translate to the devil.

LUANNE. And who do it say is the devil again? I forget. The master or the slave?

(SARA *rolls her eyes at* LUANNE.)

Yo' good book tell you to be a good slave and you obey it. It tell you to feel thangs and never move on them feelin's. It say only masters get to act on they passions. But what about the slaves? I say you can keep yo' book and I'll stick with nature.

SARA. Why don't you go to nature right now and leave me to my task?

LUANNE. Why you so quick to get rid of me Sara?

SARA. I don't likes to work with distractions.

LUANNE. Then tell me why you here and I'll leave you be.

SARA. I told you, I been reassigned.

LUANNE. Why you been reassigned? What you after?

SARA. Who say I got to be after something? I ain't you. Everything ain't about getting outta the field for me.

LUANNE. You thank all I'm 'bout is trying to get outta the field?

SARA. If the shuck 'n' cluckin' you do ain't about gettin' outta the field, then whassit for?

LUANNE. I ain't no shuck 'n' cluck.

SARA. Whatever you say. **End**

LUANNE. You ain't got to act too proud and mighty, Sara. You knew what was good for you, you'd take that passion Missy Sue got and turn it to your advantage. What I got wit' Master, you got with Missy. We ain't nothin' but two sides of the same looking glass.

SARA. Only I ain't here for no improved conditions.

LUANNE. Then what you here for?

(SARA *catches herself*. LUANNE *is about to make her get sloppy*. She *pulls back*. Goes to *scrutinize the curtains again*.)

SARA. Say he like to have these ironed?

LUANNE. Once a week, at least.

SARA. Then I better start takin' 'em down.

LUANNE. You wants some help?

SARA. What you want for the help you gon' give?

LUANNE. Damn Sara! Can't even take a helping hand without no insults to my fine character. You think I ain't the same as you? You think I done forgot?

SARA. I wouldn't know, LuAnne.

LUANNE. Admit it, Sara. You ain't never liked nor trusted me.

SARA. Seem like you just admitted it for me.

LUANNE. Why you that way to me?

SARA. I don't know.

(LUANNE *walks over to* SARA *at the desk*. She *sits at its edge*. SARA *moves the parchment slowly away from* LUANNE, *so as not to crumple it*.)