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J E R I C H O

By

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Federal Theatre Project Records
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Pastor Tucker
Deacon Taylor
Jericho
A cripple
Girl Dancer
Horace Williams
Delilah
Uppity
Nootsie
Easy
Clotile
Randall Johnson
Two Boys
Two Girls
Men and Women

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT 1

Scene 1 The interior of a Negro Church in the South
Scene 11 A dance hall in the South
Scene 111 The same

ACT 11

Scene 1 Jericho and Delilah's apartment in New York
Scene 11 Dressing Room of a fight club in New York City
Scene 111 Exterior of a country store in Jericho's home town

Act 111

Scene 1 Jericho's apartment in New York
Scene 11 Jericho's home in the South

ACT I - SCENE I

SETTING: The interior of a negro church in the deep south. The church is very simple, as the congregation is very poor. The walls are white washed, the congregation sit on benches. Swinging coal oil lanterns light the church. The pulpit is set diagonally down left stage. The center aisle faces the audience, and runs up and back to the entrance, UR. There is a window set U.C. A wheezy harmonium is off to one side of the pulpit. Special chairs of the kitchen variety are on either side of the pulpit for the Deacons and elders' of the church. The pulpit consists of a platform, upon which is built a narrow rostrum which holds a time worn bible. Above the pulpit, within reach of the Pastor, but above his head, is a wooden cross. On the upstage side of the pulpit is the "Amen corner", consisting of a row of chairs for the more fervent members of the congregation. It is twilight. As the action of the scene progresses, it darkens into night. When the scene opens the Pastor is seated at the back of the pulpit, waiting for a song to be completed.

AT RISE: Before the curtain rises we hear a spiritual, rising, and falling. It begins low and rises to full as curtain rises, continuing for about a minute after curtain rises, continuing for about a minute after curtain is up. At end of spiritual the pastor who has been seated advances to the front of the pulpit.

Pastor

Membuhs-- Dis is de bigges day in de celebrashun-- de bigges day in de yeah! Harvest Home Sunday! Hits de day when de membuhs bring paht of de bounteh you done earned wid de sweat of your brow, and de toil of your han's, and shares hit wid de Pastor! De Book say "Give, an' ye shall receive"!

(One of the members starts a song. It is taken up by the rest.)

Deacon

(To woman with banner)

Who is you?

Woman

I'se fum 'DE GOLDEN SPRAY BURYIN' SOSIASHUN'.

Man

(With high voice)

An shm fum de 'BENEVLIN ORDAH OF BLACK BRETHERS'

Woman

Me-- Ahm fum de 'SISTUHS OF DE TRUE VINE'.

Eddy

Ah represents duh 'SONS OF HAHOVA'.

Deacon

Whut has yuh got?

All

(Together
We's bearin' de horn er plenty!

Congregation
Amen-- Praise de Lawd!

Deacon
Whose it for?

Men and Women
Hits for de services of de Lawd Gawd of Jehova-- an duh Pastor!

Congregation
Praise Gawd.

Deacon
Den let em fetch it in to Gawd's Tempul to be blessed!
(A Ram's horn is blown. The congregation turns toward the door. Four men come down the aisle of the church carrying on their shoulders a rough kitchen table. On the table is a crudely made horn of plenty. Surrounding this, is every kind of farm produce the country affords. Among the offerings is a chicken in a coop. Topping all of this are large sun flower stalks that nod and bob as the men advance down the aisle. The church is full of Amens and Hallujahs. People kiss one another, shake hands-- etc. Someone starts a song in which everyone joins. The song is lively, almost the tempo of a march. During the song the Pastor, concerned with the excellence of the offering, impatiently peeps into them to see what he has gotten. Toward the end of the song we see that he has discovered that something is definitely wrong. When the song finishes he mounts the pulpit)

Pastor
Brethurs an' Sistus, befoh me ah sees a collecshun of yams and cabbages-- Ah sees turnups an' black eye peas-- I sees pumpkins an' apples. An' stickin' smak up in de middle of all dis yearthly bounteh-- Ah sees sompum else---

Brother Trinkus
(Hopefully from congregation)
Hit ain't dat chicken is it Pastuh? Ah done raise dat cockerel mahsef.

Trinkus' Wife
By han Pastuh, by han!

Pastor
(Annoyed at being interrupted)
Naw suh Brother Trinkus, hit ain't one sqwinchy, croopin' tail rooster, das causin' all dis cawnfushun up heah. Hits somepum else. Hits sompum dat won't be kivered no mattuh how much you pile on it-- No mattuh how far down you sticks it-- Ah sees it and Gawd sees it!

Congregation
Praise de Lawd!

Pastor

(Continuing)

Hits stickin' right up yere 'mongst all dis offerin' lak it belonged in dis collection of yearthly bounteh-- But hit don't. An whuts duh reason ah kin tell it so good? Kase hits black, and hits ugleh! Black, ugleh sin stickin up, big ez as Mr. Hello, right chere on de altah of de Lawd of Jehova!

Congregation

Praise de Lawd!

Pastor

(Thunderingly)

On de day when you members is supposed to look into yo hechts an' cas' out sin -- whut is you doin? Makin' pacts wid de Devil! Kase some jealous hahted sinner wants to show up big befo 'is neighbors, he brings Sin-- black, ugleh sin into de Church. Ah knows yuh sinnuh an' you can't sqwinch down no hidin' place. You can run to de rocks to hide yoh face, but de rocks dry out. Dey ain't no hidin' fum Gawd's eye sinnuh-- so you bettah git right.

Congregation

Oh Sinnuh redeem youse'f. Praise Gawd-- Jesus save him, etc.

Pastor

C ome out sinnuh, an' declar' yo sin! Come out sinnuh an ask Gawd tuh fogive you. Ah'm pintin' mah fingah straight into yo haht. Ah sees you sinnuh and Gawd sees you too. Ah sees whut you been doin! Ah sees you bin out, stealin' shoe peg sugah corn fum Mr. Charley Johnson's fahm, and done bringed hit tuh de altah of deh Lawd Gawd of Jehova!

(At this announcement, there is a terrified scream from the body of the congregation. A Little wizened man springs up. Fearfully he goes down on his knees in the aisle)

Sinner

(Lifting his hands imploring to the Pastor)

Oh Pastuh-- Youse right! Ahm a no count thief!

Pastor

(Sternly, as he fixes him with his eye)

Sinnuh de Lawd has said "Pride goeth befo' a fall, an' yo fall is comin'. De devil got 'is han' out, reachin' foh yuh now!

Sinner

(Screaming)

Sweet Jesus! Save me!

Congregation

(Chanting)

Oh Sinnuh come to Jesus an' be saved!

Old Lady

Help him mah Jesus, Help him.

Pastor

(Continuing)

'e's heapin' on duh coals-- 'e's pourin' coal oil on dat fiereh seat so's yuh kin burn good!

Sinner

(Beginning to claw his way to pulpit)

Save me Pastor, Save me!

Pastor

De Lawd got 'is face hid, an' de devil is ready!

Sinner

(Sobbing)

Pastor save me! Sweet Redeemer-- devil got me down. 'e's pullin' at meh, Pastor-- 'e's pullin' at meh!

Old Lady

Hyar 'is plea Jesus-- Help 'im mah King.

Sinner

(Almost at the altar)

Oh Jesis save meh-- Satan lemme go-- Oh Pastor lemme take de cawn back.

(sobbing)

I repents, Oh Lawd, I repents.

Pastor

Ole man Satan waitin' foh yuh now.

Sinner

Lemme give it back, Pastor. Lemme go tuh jail!

Pastor

Can't put a sin in de jail house!

Sinner

(hysterically grabbing corn and starting out)

Ah'm gonna give 'it to Mr. Charley Johnson, his own sef.

Pastor

Brother, you have repented yo sin. Depart in peace and sin no more.

Sinner

Thankyuh Pastuh--thankyuh Jesus. Ah done come over. Jesus ah done come over-- Jesus ah

(Exits with corn)

Pastor

(kneels as the church quiets)

Oh Lawd, in thy infinite wisdom, look down on dese po' backsliduhs fo' give em dere transgresshuns - fo dey know not whut dey do.

Congregation

Hail Lawd. Pray for us Pastor, Pray.

Pastor

Lead 'em outta duh shaders into de Lite, Lawd -- Keep 'em
fum dey jealous hahted ways, an dere snitchin', and dey
stealin', Lawd. Lead em Lawd, and dey 'l folloh.

Old Man

Lead us Lawd.

Old Lady

(Rocking back and forth)

Ride on to Gloreh King.

Pastor

You is our redeemer Lawd -- You is our rock an' our refuge, Amen.

Congregation

Amen

Pastor

(Rises and looks over his flock)

Brethurs and sistuhs, befo' ah goes on wid dis meetin' and de
thankin' of demembers for de gen'ris way dey done remembered me
an' Gawd -- I got somethin' very ser'ous tuh tawk er 'bout.
Ah been Pastuh tuh dis flock for a long time. Disyer has been
a peaceful an' a law abidin' community. Gawd has done walked in
yo midst-- an yo's been rewarded. De wolf done laid down wid de
lamb-- de hawk an de chicken done nes' togethuh an' hatch out
de same aigs-- But brethurs and Sustuhs, somebody done hatch
out somethin' else 'round yere--

Congregation

Sho' did-- Yassuh-- Tell him Pastuh.--

Pastor

--Yassuh-- somebodeh done hatch out a snake aig,-- A snake
wid a long bodeh and a big haid-- an effen he get a good bolt
on his communitih all dis peace an happiness I been tawkin
'erbout, is done.

Old Lady

Ride on King Jesus to salvatshun.

Pastor

(very sincerely)

Brethers and situhs, we got a natchal menace 'mongst us, lak
Adam had in de gyaden uh Eden. You mens is bein' seduced fum
doin' yo labors in de fiel's-- you wimmins is bein' seduced
fum caring fur de house and raisin' up your baby chillun to fear
Gawd, an' hate de devil. You savin's an' yo natchal resources
is being took fum ye by de devil en 'is enmisaries!

Old Lady

Ride on to Gloreh King-- Ride on'.

Pastor

(more eloquently)

Yassuh-- yous' gotta menace 'mongst you people a menace. Deres
a dance hall cropped up 'mong you members-- a dance hall!

Old Man

(Stands up and shouts)

A hell hole Pastuh,-- a hell hole.

Pastor

--A dance hall, dats seducin' yo' sons and yo' dawters fum right doin' an' right livin'. A dance hall where you sells yo' soul to Satan.

Man

(Jumps to his feet and testifies)

Dey got mah wife Pastuh-- Dey got mah wife. Dat woman took to strumpetin' lak a duck to water.

Pastor

Since dem nawthern sinners moved in on us and opened dat place, families is bein' broke up. Yo' souls is bein' lost, dancin' an' carousin. Satan de man dat toot de horn of evil soun down dere! He push de han of de erap shooter, an' he de one han' out de an' juh likkuhs.

Old Couple

(Tears streaming down their faces)

Oh Pastuh he'p us git our dawter back-- Gawd have meceh - Jesus he'p us--

Woman

Mah old man ain't bringed a bit to eat in our house sence Gawd knows when.

Pastor

(Excitedly)

Dis communiteh is bein' ruin't sence dem no count people moved in on us. Dis peace lovin' and law abidin' communiteh ain't no place for sech as dem-- Gawd has quit smilin' onyuh-- an we's bein' conjured by duh devil. Dis thing got tuh be stomped out, membuhs-- and stomped out, quick!

Woman

(Jumps up rigidly, screams, falls and is carried out)

Man

(excitedly)

Les' go git 'em, an' rum 'em outta town!

Second and Third Men

Das hit-- Les' ride 'em outta town on a rail!

(The congregation starts to its feet. They turn to the Pastor and shout)

Men

Lead us Pastuh-- an we'll folluh.

ACT I SCENE I

Pastor

(kneels and raises his hands to heaven)

Almighty Gawd sen' me a sign-- tell me what I got to do Lawd. Help me in our houh. Reveal thy se'f to us who are iggnunt an' blin'-- guide our stumblin' feets on de right road Lawd, sos we may bask in thy evah lastin' smile and benedictshun. Oh Lawd he'p yo' chillun in dere need. We's wandruhs Lawd-- Wandruhs in de wilderness er sin-- Give me a sign Lawd -- give me a sign.

Congregation

(On its knees with hands outstretched to heaven)

A sign Lawd, a sign.

Old Lady

Sen' us ah angul King-- sen' us ah angul!

Pastor

Yo' chillun' is crying in de wilderness Lawd an' yo' ain't gonna turn 'em down!

(A man-- physically huge-- and very black-- begins to move haltingly up the aisle toward the pulpit. He walks as if in a daze. The pastor does not see him and continues praying)

Pastor

Yo' is our rock. Yo' is our strank. We got er home wid yo' Lawd, an' we wants tuh come to hit clean, and good, an' wear doe's shining robes. We wants to sit an yo' right han' Lawd an' hear dat heavenly choir. Sen' us a sign Lawd-- He'p yo' chillun-- a sign Lawd-- a sign-- a

(He looks up and sees the man who by now has reached the pulpit)

Pastor

(Rising from his knees and letting out a terrific shout)

Hossannah! De Lawd done yered mah plea!

Congregation

(Screams)

Hossannah!

Pastor

(Weeping with joy)

Raise up membuhs, whilst ah praise mah Lawd! Ah was cryin' in de wildehniss an' mah Lawd done yeered me call! He done open up his years an' yeered me shout. De Lawd done sent de champion! 's done sen' mah own deah son, Jerecho to repersent me in mah houh. Jerecho, who is my firs' born-- Jerecho-- mah own baby chile-- Jerecho, de stronges' man 'round yere, is gonna go forth for mah Lawd.

(He raises Jerecho to the pulpit beside him)

De Lawd done comed into yo' haht boy, and sent you to me when ah needs you mos. 'e done gived you all dat double jined strank yuh got tuh do 'is work-- but youse still stronger now-- cause yo' got 'em inyo' haht as well as in yo' ahms! You got Gawd wid yo' son, an' yo' doan stan' toh lose.

Congregation

(Chants)

De Lawd sent Jerecho, an Jerecho gonna save us! 7

Pastor

(Takes up his worn bible)

Take Gawds Symbul wid you son and go fo'th. Bring duh work to dem backsliduhs lak mah Jesus done brawt hit to de Pharisees. Youse uh messenger uh heaben, an none kin stan' befo' yuh. Go down to Fo' Gawnduh Dance Hall an strike terror into de hahts uh de Philistines. You is duh savior uh duh communiteh an Gawds speshul angul-- Search out all duh cawnhuhs, and de alleyhs an' back Paf's son, an run em out! Let em know dat dis communiteh doan want none uh dem! Run dose sinnuhs back to hell, Let Sodom and Gomorrah know dis ain' no place foh 'em-- an doan yuh faltuh an doan you fail, 'cause yuh got duh Lawd Gawd uh Jehovah ez uh guide.

(He puts the Bible into Jericho's hand and gives him a gentle push toward the door. Jericho starts up the aisle. He walks as if he is dazed by the tremendous emotion around him. The congregation starts a song of exaltation. The Pastor falls on his knees in prayer.)

Pastor

Oh Lawd-- he'p mah son in 'is quest. Delivuh his enemies into his han's, Lawd. Guide his footsteps straight an' true and let him come home safe an' soun' Lawd, wid de light of 'is love for yuh shinin' in 'is eyes.

Cripple

(A little man in the throes of hysteria with a high voice. He grabs a swinging lantern from the church)
Oh mah Jesus-- Ah'm gonna light 'is way!

(The songs swell as Jericho and the cripple slowly exit.)

Curtain

SETTING: During the first and second scenes the curtain is lowered while the scene is changed. During the change the spiritual of the preceeding scene is continued. It diminishes in volume, until it is superceded by the music of a jazz band. The music from the dance hall. This builds as we begin to lose the spiritual, and it is intermingled with shouts, laughter, snatches of song, etc. One is superimposed upon the other. There is no definite ending or beginning of either music. They flow into one another and become an integral part of the other. When the curtain rises we see the interior of a dance hall in the south. It is a low, barn-like structure with benches running around its wall. There is an entrance down right. A bar runs up right stage. There are tables set around the dance floor to accomodate those wealthier patrons who sit and drink. Open love making is going on, the band is playing a 'hot' number, and most of the couples are dancing. They dance for about a half minute and gradually work up stage, leaving a man and woman practically isolated. This couple engage in what is known as 'fancy strutting' until the girl finding her partner an obstacle, breaks away from him and begins to dance alone.

Girl

Sweet Poppah! Lemme hit it alone.

Man

(Patting his hands)

Dance it honey, dance' it.

Second Man

Looka dat 'ooman do dat nannygoat struggle!

Voice

(In crowd)

Mean mean 'ooman, yo' done got me down!

Woman

Dat gal ain got no shame--

Man

Easeh ridin' babeh doan' yo' dare tuh stop!

Second Man

Easeh ridin' momuh yo' done flag dis train!

Girl Dancer

Ah'm gonna dance mah way tuh hell an' back-- look out people, got dancin' in mah feet!

(She glances toward the door, and sees Jericho entering with his bible held before him/ She screams, and tries to hide in the crowd.)

Girl Dancer

(Screaming)

Sweet Jesus!--

(As Jericho advances into the room the whole crowd fall back before him. A glass clatters to the floor, dropped by some nerveless hand.)

Jericho

(Haltingly)

Peopke, Hawkun tuh me, whilst ah brings duh word: Duh time is comin' when deh Lawd gonna visit 'is wraf on yo haid. 'e doan lak drinkin' and 'e doan lak dancin'. 'e gonna come down to fo' Cawnduh dance hall an' smite dis place in 'is anguh!

(At the sound of Jericho's voice, the crowd recognizing him, lose its fear, and begins to shout angrily at him)

Voice

(Indignant)

Fo' Gawd's sake! Ain' nobodeh but dat crazeh Jer'cho!

Second Voice

(Indignantly)

Somebodeh awtta slap dat crazeh fool down. Comin' in yere, skeerin' people dataway!

Jericho

(Holding up bible)

Pepul, yeah meh, Jesus is yo' redeemuh an' yo' salvashun! Dis place is ah snare, fo! deh weak, Satan done built. Dis is uh trap, toh git yuh sell tuh soul tuh hell!

Woman

(Disgustedly)

Aw go on home, ole crazy boy, an' preach whar preachin' belongs!

Man

Das right, Ole' crazy fool, dis ain' no place to be carryin' yuh cross an' yuh tribulashuns!

Jericho

Oh mah sistuhs an' my brethus, you bettuh lissen to whut ah got toh tell yuh! Yous! dancin' yosef tuh hell! Dat music is sweet -- but 'its leadin' yuh toh duh devil.

(During the next speeches, the music begins to play very softly, under Jericho's words. As the scene progresses, it gets bolder, until finally Jericho has fallen into its rhythm.)

Man's Voice

C'mon babeh, les' git to truckin'

Jericho

De book say 'all dis dancin' an' carousin' is a sho nuff ticket tuh hell. De book say dat music is duh devil ahorus.

Woman

(In a high voice)

Wyn't you stay home wid dat preachuh paw er yo's?

Jericho

Whilst I wus walkin' in de fe'ls' Gawd done spoketuh meh!

Woman

(Laughing)

Is he done tole yo' how tuh do duh buzzad lope?

(The crowd shouts with laughter at this. More couples have drifted away)

Jericho

'e say' Jericho, dem people at fo' Cawndoh dance hall is headin' straight foh hell, lessen yuh go down dere an' git 'em to stop dere shameful doin' an' dere shoffly ways.

Women

Is 'e tole yo' 'bout de good anjou likkers Mr. Willyama dispensin'?

Jericho

Sinnuhs repent fo' de devil gitta good holt on yuh.

(He grabs a passing dancer who twists from his graps)

Come on brothuh, come tuh Hesus wid me, an' repent.

Dancer

(Pulling away)

Take yo' big han' offen me, ole crazeh fool.

Jericho

Peopul, yo's breakin' Gawd's haht-- deres weepin' and deres wailin' behin' dem pearly gates.

Horace Williams

(Coming over)

All right boy, you've had yo' say e-- now seram -- befoh ah has mah bouncer Uppity, thow yo' out!

Crowd

Das right Mr. Williams. Yo' tell 'im.

Delilah

(Coming over)

Waita minute Horace (to Jericho) Sweet poppah, yo' sho' look good tuh me.

Jericho

(Looking at her)

Sistuh, quit dis devil shufflin' an' leadem on de way. Gawds symbol is in yo' face-- let 'is word git in yo' haht.

Delilah

(Twisting herself into the half circle of his upraised arms)

Of all de mens 'around yere-- yous deh best ah evah did see.

Voice

De man gone now-- Delilah getta holt of him.

Jericho

(Flattering)

Dis is a evul place an' Gawd gonna smite 'it. De church people sent me tuh tell yo' effen yeh dean close down, an' dey gonna raze 'it tuh deh groun'. Day gonna ride yo---

Delilah

C'mon babeh, quit dis tawkin', and begin to sing.

Jericho

(Looking into her face)

Sistuh won't yuh come to Gawd? Sistuh won't yuh let Jesus in yo' haht?

Delilah

(With her arms around him, and pulling him around in a half stumble)

Is 'e nice as yo' preachuh?

Jericho

Oh Mah Gawd give me strank, keep me frum temptashun. People come to Gawd.

Voice

Hits big day in de mawin' when Delilah git er holt on yuh!

Jericho

(Resisting)

Yo' cain't temp' me wooman -- Yuh cain't temp' meh.
(Thye crowd becomes interested in Jericho's downfall. They begin to pat and urge Delilah on. The music is sweeter now.)

Woman

(In a half chant)

Dance preachuh, dance, cause day ain't no jazz in heaben.

Jericho

(Half heartedly struggling)

Lemme loose. Lemme loose. Ah gotta bring deh word.

Voice

Show 'im honeh, show 'im.

Voice

Shake it at 'im sugah, an' 'e won't turn llose.

Jericho

(Panting)

Woman, yo'se duh instermunt er Satan. -- Oh Jesus, save mah soul, Jesus help me quit. Dat music got meh down.
(Jericho's arms encircle Delilah. He is completely lost in the rhythm of her body, and the music. The whole crowd has gathered around Delilah and Jericho and pat and shout in rhythm.)

Voice

(Patting in time with music)
Do dat Angul stomp-- Hit dose Jedgement blues.

Crowd

(Picking it up)
Hit dose jedgement blues -- do dat Angul Stomp

Voice

(Singing)
Peter in de pulpit an' 'e cain't git out.

(Crowd pats)

Voice

Gabel blow dat jedgement honn--
(Crowd pats)

Voice

Preachuh got de itch an' 'e cain't stop now.

Delilah

(Close to Jericho's ear)
(The Pastor enters with a good part of his congregation trailing after him. They drape themselves half in the windows from the outside, crowd around the door, etc.)

Pastor

(Shouldering his way tru crowd and wrenching Jericho away from Delilah)
Leggo dat scahlet 'ooman!

(Crowd is transfigured. They draw back, Jericho is terror stricken)

(Wrenching Bible from Jericho's hand)

Shet up! Dis is duh qay Gawd entuh yo sinful haht, you no count, backbitin' sinnuh. Wen yuh comed walking' up duh ile uh duh chu'ch ah thawt Gawd done called yuh, an' yuh yeahed duh call! But hit t'was duh devil an' dat devul's music'. Yo's uh liar an traducer! Yuh done lied about mah Jesus. Yuh done took duh saccud word of Gawd an passed hit in uh sinful mannuh 'bout dis strumpets bobeh! Gawd gonna punish yuh fo' flauntin' yuh pashun in His eyes. He gonna smite yuh wid uh botch an uh scab -- oh may Lawd--

Jericho

(Terror stricken)
Pappeh don't -- don't put dat curse on meh.

Pastor

(Heedless)
Oh mah Gawd punish dis sinnuh. Even tho' 'es mah won deah son,

Pastor (continued)

smite 'im Lawd. Smite 'im to duh ground! Smite 'im Lawd in 'is big hour— make 'im come crawlin tuh yuh on 'is han's and knees wailin fo' yuh mi'ceh an yo fohgiveness.

Williams

(Advancing to the Pastor)

Wait a minute, Pastor. Yeh don't wantaa excite yo' sé'f. Dere ain't no hahm done. Jus' al Lil' dancin' and singin', das all.

Pastor

No hahm done! Jus' a little dancin' an' singin'? A powerful lot uh sinnin' and drinkin'. Das whut yo' mean. Crap shootin' an' suhdultury. Das whut yo' mean. Flauntin' de Lawd's day, das whut yo' mean! Dis is a hell hole das gottuh go.

Williams

(Breaking in)

No hil' on, Pastuh —

Pastor

(Continuing)

An effen hit doan go peaceful, we gonna burn 'it to deh groun' an' ride all you strumpets an' ease men outta town on a rale!

Pastor

(Thunderingly)

Yo' got twenty fo' hours tuh close up dis place an' git — yuh got

Jericho

(Interrupting)

Pappy.

Pastor

Ah ain't yo pappy. You's er Judas Os'cah, wat betrayed mah Lawd, wen he stopped wid 'im at duh welcome feast! Git home an' ask duh Lawd tuh fo'give yuh. Ask yo' sinmuh, before hits too late.

(Turning to the crowd)

Twennyfo' houhs, sinmuhs toh close up an' got! Else we gonna ride yo' outta town!

(He strides out)

Jericho

(Turns to follow him. As he does, Delilah comes over to him. Puts her arms thru his)

Delilah

(Sensously)

Waitta minute babeh, an' ah'll walk a little piece wid yuh!

(They exit together)

SETTING: TIME, THE FOLLOWING MORNING

SCENE: The same as scene 2. The dance hall is deserted, and in great disorder as if its occupants had left hurriedly. Tables are overturned, chairs and bottles lie about. It wears the general air of a tired, dispirited hoyden. The manager, HORACE WILLIAMS, is sitting with his legs astride a chair, leaning on it back. He is smoking a huge black cigar, and wears an air of thoughtful worry. He faces the audience. NOOTZIE, one of the natives, enters to him. He takes off his hat respectfully as he hesitantly comes to WILLIAMS. Williams doesn't turn his head at all, he just keeps puffing his cigar.

Williams

Well -- wad' yah find out?

Nootzie

Mistuh Williams -- yous in a bad fix. Dem church people mean bizniz. Dey ain't no turnin' 'em. (He hesitates a moment, then resumes)
Effen ah wuz you, ah wouldn't open dis! yer place tuhnite.

Williams

No?

Nootzie

Nawsuh. Dey ain't no tellin' whut dey'll do. Deacon Taylor say deh preachuh tawkin' 'bout to Mr. Chahley Jonson!

Horace Williams

Who's he?

Nootzie

Lawd! Evabodeh know Mr. Jonson. He duh wite man got dat big plantation down by de rivah, an' he run things he way around yere.

Williams

What de preachuh got to do wid Mr. Jonson?

Nootzie

Mr. Jonson powerful fond of dat preachuh-- an' he do what duh Revyn say when it comes to us people. Mr Jonson say, deh preachuh keep us prayin' 'steder drinkin' 'an carousin' -- an a do-right wuk hahder den a drinkin' one.

Williams

How come de preachuh toh git so friendly wid a wite man?

Nootzie

Oh, dat wuz long ergo. Deh preachuh son, Jericho smak a wite man down, and de folks ro'in' yere wuz thinkin' 'bout lynchin' him. Mr. Jonson got 'im off, an' aftuh dat, evah time a

Nootzie (continued)

One of us git into trouble, Wham! de preachuh run to Mr. Jonson, and Mr. Jonson do whut he say!

Williams

Oh Yeah.

Easy

(As he enters, he takes off his hat)

How do Mistuh Willyams--- Hello Nootzie. Say! Ah jus' cum fum Pastuh Tuckers house an' de Pastuh say effen dis place open up tuhnite dey gonna be a rail pahty outta town!

Nootzie

Das jus' whut ah ben tellin' Mr. Willyams! Dem people means bizniz.

Easy

An' bad bizniz, Mansuh! Ah ain't nevah se'n de Pastuh so aggehvated. Jer'co ain't showed up last night, and deh Pastuh's maddern' uh ole passuler hawnets!

Nootzie

Whar yo' reckon he wiz?

Easy

Ah doan know--- but de Pastuh say he's wid some of dese easy ridin' momuhs fum dis dance hall -- an effen he ketch 'im, he gonna knock 'im fun uh amazin' grace to uh floatin' oppuhtumenteh.

Williams

Who dis Jer'co?

Nootzie

Das 'is son. De man staht all dat ruckus in yere las' night.

Williams

Oh das him.

Easy

(Cackles with laughter)

Das de one. Lawd! deh pastuh shouda had bettah sense den tuh sen' dat backslide down yere.

Horace

Well, if ah ketches 'in hangin' 'round heah anymo' dere's gonna be trouble.

Nootzie

(Quickly)

Now hol on Mr. Willyams, yuh wants to go slow. 'cause dat Jer'co's uh powerful man wen he gits stahted. He doan know 'is own strank.

Williams

Oh heah. Well, ah'll jus' tell Uppity to be on deh lookout, den ef he kin git pas' Uppity, he mus' be good.

(Calling Uppity)

Uppity

Yassah

(he appears in the doorway)

Williams

Uppity, yuh know dat good for nothin' hick cause all dat trouble in heah las' night?

Uppity

Yassuh

Williams

Well, ef yo' see 'im hangin' around dis place-- Let 'im have it!

Uppity

(Grinning)

Hassuh.

(He turns to go)

Williams

(Calling)

An' Uppity --

Uppity

(Stopping)

Yassuh?

Williams

Doan mak' it too easeh!

Uppity

(Excitedly)

Nawsuh.

Easy

Oh. Oh. Ah sho' wouldn't wan' tuh see dem two tangle!

Nootzie

Who? Yo's crazy. Wat chance would Jer'co have wid dat man. Doanchu know. 'es a prize fightuh in 'e spah time.

Easy

I knowa dat-- but dat Jer'co er pow'ful man all duh time.

(Delilah enters)

Williams

(To the two men)

Okay. Wait outside. Wen ah wants yuh. Ah'll call yuh.

Nootzie and Easy

Yassuh.

Williams

(To Delilah)

Whar yo's bin?

Delilah)

(Stretching luxuriously)

Ah bin inspectin' a chicken fahm. Ah's thinkin' of settlin' down, and raisin' poultreh.

Williams

(Sullen)

Ah don' wanna heah no wise crackin'.

Delilah

(Turning)

Whuts de mattuh, is dat preachuh concerted yo' too? Uppity's bin tellin' me you's thinkin' er closin' up?

Williams

Ah ain't thinkin'-- I've closed up. But yo' wain't ansuh me, I wants to know where you bin all night.

Delilah

(Sullenly)

Das mah bizniz.

Williams

(Quickly)

Hits mah bizniz, too. Yuh bin wid dat psalm singin' bastard dat cause all dat trouble in yere las' night.

Delilah

(Laughing)

Williams

Ah sware tuh God, Delilah, ah so can't make yo' out. Yoh couldda had deh pick er men erlong Lennix Ave-- me included-- But you waits till yo' git in dis Sonny-Kick mammy place, toh pick up wid a country hick wid boll wevils in 'is har'h.

Delilah

(Laughing and stretching luxuriously)

Hit ain' boll wevil dat make a man, Horace-- nor long cigars, er a gold watch chain.

Williams

(Gets up)

Yo' sho pick de wrong man. Dat preachuh is 'is paw-- and he's raisin' hell cause dat boy didn't come home las' night. We got to close up, else deys plannin' to ride us outta dis town on a rail!

Delilah

(Scornfully)

It seems to me, yo' skeer nighteh easeh big boy. Dess country folks ain't got guts enuf to run nobedeh outta no town on no rail.

Williams

(Seriously)

Now looka yere, Delilah, dem chuch people mean biznis.

Delilah

How does yo' know?

Williams

Ah got Easeh an' Nootzie to do some scoutin' 'roun'.

Delilah

(Angrily)

Whut about me-- an mah money. Who gonna pay fo' dat?

Williams (Strong)

(Shaking hys head)

Wooman, ah ain't nevah seen anybodeh so greedy. All Yo' talks about sence yo' bin down here, is money.

Delilah (Easy)

Yas, an das all ah keers 'bout, 'cause wen yo' got money yo' can strut down Lenix Ave. an' tell de whol worl to go to hell. Das all dat intrus' me. Who gonna pay me for deh money, yo' got me to put us foh dis two by fo' place?

Williams

(Coming over and putting his hand on hers)

Well, now babeh, wen we gits back to New Yawk-- Ah'll make it all right wid yuh. Ain' we partners? Shux. Dat'll be easeh.

Delilah

(Jerking away)

Git yo han's offa me. Das whut you said 'bout dis dance hall, way down heah in hell an' gone. "We could clean up! Country folks doan have no fun" Dey'll welcome us lak a celebratshun. Yes-- wid a rail pahty outta town.

Williams

Well, now sugah. Ah couldn't figah dat we wuz gonna tangle wid some crazeh preachur an' 'is son. Could ah.

Delilah

Yo' can't figger notan. But ah ain't goin' Ah ain' skeered of no preachur. An' ah got 'is son eatin' outta mah han'. Ah'm stayin' on till ah gits back mah dough.

Williams

(Moving over)

Sugah, yuh can't do dat. Dat preachur gonna git de wite folks down yere instrusted -- and den whut?

Delilah

Who said so?

Williams

Me. Das jus' whut ah tryin' to tell yo' Dat preachur got tuh be a big shot wid a plantatshun man down yere, Mr. Jonson. An' if deh preachur say so, Mr. Jonson'll crack down on us. An'

Delilah

Who tole yo' all dis.

Williams

Nootsie and Easy. Das whut I bin tryin' tuh tell yo'. Now lissen tuh me honey. Ah'll tell yo' whut ah'll do. Les yo' an me leave dis little shoofly dancee hall, an' take Uppity wid us. Ah'll give yo' a piece of him an' we'll pick us up some fights wid some of dese countriy Makes up further Nawth. Dat way, you kin git back yo' dough.

Delilah

Who's going to pay for all this.

ACT 1 - SCENE 3

Das whar ah come in. Yo' doan think ah was gonna 'llow us ter be caught wid no dough didyuh! Shux, babeh, ah got cawfahr fer us. Whatcha say Sugah!

(He moves over and attempts to take her in his arms)

Delilah

(Pulling away)

Cut dat out, Horace.

Horace

Honey, how come yo' doan like me?

Delilah

Ah doan lak no mens - lessen ah kin git somepun from 'em.

Horace

Whatcha mean git somepun from 'em.

Delilah

Whut evah dey got.

Horace

Ain' ah got somepun?

Delilah

Nuthin dat ah wants. You's small time, big boy.

Williams

How 'bout--

(Just then, there is a terrible commotion outside
Lester, a Yes man of Williams, rushes in excitedly)

Lester

Fo' Gawd's sake, Mr. Willyams, come out an' stop it. Uppity an' dat man Jer'co is tusselin' out in de road, and he like to kill Uppity.

Williams

(Starting up)

Whuts dat!

Jericho

(Bursting into the room. His eyes are blazing
with rage, blood runs from a cut on his lips.
He glares at Horace)

Whars Delilah?

Delilah

(Advancing slowly to him)

H'yar I is. Whuts all de ruckus about?

Jericho

Dat man say he gonna keep me outta hy'are!

Delilah

Who?

Jericho

Uppiddy-- das who

Delilah

Why?

Jericho

Ah doan no - But ah had tuh bus 'im one fo' 'e let me pass.

Delilah

(Incredulously)

Yuh hit Uppitty- an' you's still on yo' feets! Whar's Uppitty?

Jericho

(Grinning)

Lyin' in duh road, effen dey ain' drugged 'im away!

Delilah

(Bewildered)

But dat man used tuh be a prizefightuh

Jericho

(Quickly)

Dat doan make no diffunce tuh me, wen duh man tryin' keep me fum gittin' in tuh see yuh.

Delilah

(Amazed)

Well, ah'll be Goggamed! Whar'd yo' learn tuh fits so good?

Jericho

Playin' wid deh boys, 'round duh steamboat landin'; But lissen honey, dat ain' whut ah come all dis way tuh tawk tuh yuh 'bout. Whut erbout me an yuh gittin' mah'ed.

Delilah

(Laughs)

Whuts dat?

Jericho

(Quickly)

Ah done mean no tuck-up kin' o humbug, but mah'ee lawful, wid de eye witness, an' deh han' witnuss too.

Delilah

(Laughing again)

Yo' sho is cute! But dis gal is city bred. Ah needs lights an cabarets. Ah needs Lenix Ave. an' er hundred an thuty fift' street.

Horace

(Enters)

Boy, yo' sho' is bad luck tuh me. Firs' yo' bus' up mah dance hall, an' now, yo' bus' up mah fightuh!

Delilah

(Turning quickly)

Whut he do, Horace?

Horace

Hit Uppiddy, an bus' 'is jaw.

Delilah

(Incredulously)

He whut.

Williams

Das right. Bus' it as clean as er whistle.

Jericho

(Sincere apology)

Ah ain' mean no hahm, Mist' Willyum, but 'e ain't had no right tuh call me outta mah name, an' try an keep me outta yere.

Delilah

(Admiringly)

C'mere man, an' lemme feel yo' ahms.

(she does)

Boy, yo' sho' is strong.

Jericho

(Grinning down at her)

Ah'm strong fo' yo' sugah.

Delilah

(Coming to a sudden decision and pushing Jericho away)

Look, yuh done got me all muss up wid yuh block an' dus' Gawn out an' wash yo' se'f.

Jericho

(Looking at her dress)

Ah ain' mean tuh muss yuh honey. Yuh ain' mad, is yuh?

Delilah

No, but go 'haid an' git clean up laka decent man. Yo' look lak some box caw.

Jericho

(exit to rear)

Doan go way now, 'cause ah wantuh tawk tuh yuh.

(He exits)

Delilah

(Watching him depart and then turning quickly to Horace)

Ah got uh idea. Uh honey!

Horace

(Dully)

Yeah!

Delilah

(Breathlessly)

How good wuz Uppiddy -- foh he hit deh booze?

Horace

He'da bin Champ shore, ef he coulda kep' away fum it. Why?

Delilah

Why? Hell? Doan' yuh see, hot shot? If Uppiddy wuz dat good, an' dis boy knock 'im out, he mus' be twict as good!

Horace

(Disgusteely)

Dat wuz a lucken punch.

Delilah

(Cynically)

Nuts. Lucky punches doan break jaws-- not on prizefightus. Ah knows dat much.

Horace

(Looking up)

Well?

Delilah

Lissen. Spozen' we wuz tuh tak dis boy to Noo Yawk. Train 'im, make a fightuh outta him-- We could clean up.

Horace

Ef he really good-- we could.

Delilah

Yo' right we could. Ah bin waitin' foh sompin' lak dis tuh come erlong all er my life-- an jumps right in mah ahms.

Williams

Hol' on Delilah. Not so fas'. Ah ain' got ernuff dough tuh got us all to Hahlem.

Delilah

(Briskly)

Ah got some dough lef'. Yuh doan think ah wuz fool ernuf tuh stick it all in dis shanty yuh calls dance hall, does yuh? Gawd ah ain' dat dumb!

Horace

Whut erbout his paw?

Delilah

Leave dat tuh me. Ah'll take care er dat. Yuh bettah scram sos ah kin tawk tuh him wen he git back.

Horace

(Rising)

(Stops)

Okay. But waiter minute. How does we figger?

Delilah

We splits - 50-50. Yuh does de manging foh de fights-- an' ah does de mangin' of de fightuh. Yo' gits twenny fi' per cent, ah' ah gits twenty fi' per cent.

Horace (Dubiously)

Hol' on. Duh manager usually gits half.

Delilah
(Decisively)

Not dis one. Is it a deal? Or does ah take him to Noo Yawk alone?

Horace
(Considering a moment)

Okay.
(Starts out)

Delilah
(Warningly)

An' rembah-- Ah gits dis railroad fahr paid back, outta de firs' fight.

Horace
(Stops admiringly)

Wooman, yuh got jew blood in yuh!

Delilah
(Nods)

Maybe. Scram. Yer he coms.
(Horace exits quickly. Delilah lights a cigarette.
Jericho enters) (Delilah poses on table)

Jericho
(Walking over to her quickly - gives her once over)

How does ah looks now, mommuh?

Delilah
(Critically)

Purty good - Fer dem rags.

Jericho
(Hurt)

Whut yuh mean, rags?

Delilah
(Scornfully)

Yuh doan call dem clos' does yuh?

Jericho
(Sheepishly)

Shux. Deys a little to' up fum fightin'. But dat ain' nuthin'. Dey kin be mended, easeh.

Delilah

Look boy, how'd yuh like tuh make er lot er money-- an' buy all de high yaller close yuh want.

Jericho

Datud be swell. But how'm ah gonna make all dat money. Rouster 'boutin' ain' gonna buyem.

Delilah

(Myseriously)

Naw, but ah knows erway dat will.

Jericho

How?

Delilah

Fightin'.

Jericho

(Amazedly laughs)

Fightin?

Delilah

(Cuddling up to him)

Shore. Look, babeh. How'd yuh like tuh come tuh de city wid me an' Horace? We'd make a fightuh outta yuh, an' yuh could git all de clos' an' things yuh want.

Jericho

(Pulling her close)

Ah doan want nuthin' but yuh.

Delilah

(Sensuously)

Well, ef yuh fight good, an' make plenteh money, yuh kin have me too.

Jericho

(Grabbing her)

Aw babeh!

(A long kiss)

But honey, ah cain't fight lessen' ah mad-- an'

Delilah

(Laughs)

Das easeh. Ah gits yuh mad, evva time yuh goes intuh de ring.

Jericho

Ah sho would lak tuh see deh citeh. Ah ain' nevah bin tuh Noo Leens.

Delilah

Who tawkin' 'bout Noo Leens. Ah means er big town. Noo Yawk, whare dere's fights, and excitement. Whare all yuh have tuh do is step outta yo' do, an hyar a band play. Whare de mens an de wimmins strut dere stuff all day long on Lenix Ave.

Jericho

(Eyes shining)

Hot dam. Dat sho mus' be swell.

(His face falls)

But whut about mah Paw? Ah couldn't leave 'im. He sold an' couldn't got erlong widout meh.

Delilah

(Scornfully)

Ain'tchu got no ambishun? Doan yuh wanna be somebodeh. Er big shot. Steader pickin' cotton down hagh an' routerboutin' on dese meesly steamboats all yo' life? Hell.

Jericho

(Doubtfully)

Sho, sugah. But ah can't leave mah paw.

Delilah

An' why not. He doan need yo'. He tole yuh so las' nite. An' besides, he got de church tuh keep him going.

Jericho

(Longingly)

Yas. Yous right erbout dat. He sho did light into meh las night. An he do love dat church.

Delilah

Sho he do. An' whut yo' gonna da? Tail aftuh him all yo' days wen yuh gotta chance to go tuh de city, make er lottal bucks, and maybe got tuh be champion er de worl. How'd yuh lak dat. Champion Jer'co. Why, yuh might make ermuf buil' er new church one day.

Jericho

(Entranced)

Grate day in de mawnin'. Ain' dat sompin.

Delilah

(Pressing her point)

Well, whad yuh say!

Jericho

Well!

Delilah

(Coming to him again)

An' how erbout me! Ain' ah wuth comin to duh city wid?

(She walks over to him and gives him a long passionate kiss.)

Jericho

Babeh, ah'd go tuh hell wid you!

C U R T A I N

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

The living room of Jericho and Delilah's apartment in New York City some years later. The living room is furnished in a gaudy manner, denoting the lavish spending of money. There is a door down right, leading to the outer hall. Another back R. leads to the kitchen of the apartment. Down left, a door leading to the bedroom. There is a profusion of red--red lamp shades, red furniture, etc. The lamp shades all have elaborate and gaudily fringed shades.

AT RISE: CLOTILE, a friend of Horace Williams is discovered seated in a chair. Delilah strides nervously up and down the room, smoking cigarettes.

Clotile

Whyn't you set down, and res' yourself, Delilah, you gonna be all wore out, when dey do come.

Delilah

(Irritably)

Ah can't set down. Evvey time we gotta uh big fight on our hands' that starts to make duh rounds of all th' bar rooms in Harlem.

Clotile

(Pleadingly)

Dey ain't nothin' tuh worry 'bout honey, Horace gonna find him.

Delilah

Horace. Hell, all he kin do is set uh round an' blow uh bout 'how we won dat last fight!

Clotile

(Dignifiedly)

You got to remember Delilah, dat Horace got a hard job on 'is han's--gittin' de fights-- an makin' Jericho train.

Delilah

(Contemptuously)

Hard job. All he got tuh do is sign 'em up-- Ah figgers 'em out. And he doan have to live wid dat big baboon-- like ah do.

Clotile

But Gawd knows Delilah-- he gives you evvything you wants--

Delilah

(Breaking in)

Give me evvything ah wants-- ah works for it-- And god damned hard. Ah'm gittin' tired of running aftuh dat guy, evvy time he git two dolluhs in 'is pocket.

Clotile

Well, Gawd knows Delilah, he can't have much mo dan dat-- th'

Clotile (continued)

way you been spendin' money-- Look live evvy time I sees you, you got on uh new dress. When you broke out wid dat yeller automobile-- dat was too much.

Delilah

You ain't doin' so bad wid Horace is you?

Elotile

No. But Horace got uh wife to think uhbout as well as me.

Delilah

Well, ah ain't got nobody but me too think uhbout-- an dat's all dis baby'll evah have. You ain't nevah gonna ketch me losin' mah haid over some man.

Clotile

Oh. Oh. You sho' is hahd.

Delilah

Not hahd,--smart. You don't think ah been nursin' dis country hick fo' nothin' do you? Ah'm gonna git mine, whilst de gittin's good. An' baby, wen duh time come, ah'm gonna lay back an' enjoy mahself. Ef ah kin jus' keep dat Jericho straight, now dat we gittin' in de impo'tent dough.

Clotile

Horace say, dis fight is jus' uh set up fo' Jericho.

Delilah

It won't be no set up effen Horace can't git 'im outta dose bar-rooms and into dat trainin' camp tonight. He shouda bin up dere two days ago.

Clotile

Ah wondah wat make him like dat.

Delilah

Hell, deh firs' time he knock some Palooka out, he got so swole haided dat yuh couldn't tawk to him. All he do is walk duh streets so's to heah duh pepul shout an holler aftuh him. Think he's Champion already.

Clotile

Horace say he gonna be Champion someday.

Delilah

He gonna be, ef I has anything too do wid it. And den come duh big dough, duh kinda money ah bin waitin' for!

(Her eyes shine)

God damm.

(There's a noise in the hall of an elevator door opening and loud voices)

Clotile

(jumping up)

Yeer dey come now.

Delilah
(Putting out her cigarette)
Hits about time.

(The door is flung open and Jericho, accompanied by Horace Williams, Uppity and Randall Johnson strides in. Jericho is in high spirits.)

Jericho
(Striding over to her)
Hello Sugah.

Delilah
(Coldly)
Whare you bin?

Jericho
(Turning to the rest)
Oh! Oh! Dar she go.
(To her)
Jus' out tellin' some of duh boys goodbye, babeh.

Delilah
You bin tellin' 'em goodbye for two days-- wen you gonna leave?

Jericho
Now honey, doan be like dat. Look, ah brought comp'ny.
(To Randall)
C'mere Randall. Delilah, dis is Randall Johnson, duh gamblinist man in Hahlem. Duh man say he done git rich bettin' on meh.
(Randall steps forward)

Randall
(Raking her hand)
That's right, Mis' Delilah ah sho has. But ef I knew you was gonna be heah, he'd ben home, long before dis.

Delilah
(Slowly)
Oh yeah.

Randall
Ah reckon you bout de most famous wooman in Hahlem-- mos' famous as Jericho himself. Ah bin wantin' to meet you fo' uh long time.

Delilah
(Pleased)
Well, dey tells me you git around right smart yo'self.

Jericho
(Chuckling)
Hot dawg! Boy! No wondah dey calls you "Sweet Tawkin"!, yuh done tawked dat wooman outta givin' me hell. Ah awt tuh have you 'roun me mo'.

Randall
(Looking at Delilah)
Maybe dat wouldn't be a bad idea.

Delilah

(Turning to Jericho)

It'll take moren' dat. Is you gonna git to dat trainin' camp-- or is I gonna have to drag you dere?

Jericho

(Chuckling)

Lissen to dis wooman. Sho, sugah. Ah'm goin' right uh way. Dat is, aftuh we has us uh little drink.

Horace

(Coming forward)

Now look Jericho, you gotta cut dat out. You got de most impotent fight on yuh hands comin' up-- an boy, you gotta be right.

Uppity

(Chiming in)

Das right, Jericho, you gotta go slow.

Jericho

(Snorting)

Hell! Whut you two buzzards croakin bout now? You know dat Wildcatseaseh.

Horace

He ain't dat easeh. Ain't no bodeh easeh till he layin' on duh flo'.

Jericho

(Xing and sitting down)

He good as doin' dat now.

Delilah

Doan be so big mouf. If you could fight as you kin tawk, you wouldn' have tuh fight, -- evvabody would be skeered tuh git in uh ring wid you.

Jericho

How 'bout de las drink, mommuh, fo' ah pulls out.

Delilah

(Going to a cabinet)

Well, ah spouse wid all you got in you, one mo' won't hurt you. But dis is de las', you heah me, till aftuh dat fight.

Jericho

(Grinning and winking behind her back)

Yass'um.

Horace

(Looking at his watch)

And we can't linger too long over dat. We got tuh be going. We's two days late now.

Clotile

You gonna have to go some, to catch up with dat.

Randal

(Going over to Delilah)

Can't ah help you, Mis' Delilah?

Jericho

(Chuckling)

Dat sho is uh lady's man fer true. Boy, no wondah you got all de wimmins chasin' you.

Delilah

(Turning)

So you got all de wimmins chasin' you, Mr. Johnson?

Randal

(Helping her)

De ones you kin git tuh chase yuh Mis' Delilah, ain't de ones you want, all duh time.

Delilah

(Looking at him)

Yeah-- so dey tells me.

(She brings over the drinks)

Horace

(Rising)

How 'bout uh toas'-- to Jer'cho -- an' his winnin' dis next fight.

Jericho

(Raising his glass)

Swell-- tuh me, an uh one round knockout.

Randall

(Laughing and stopping him)

Wait uh minute -- ef we drinks to dat -- dat lets you out -- duh man you toastin' kain't drink--

Jericho

(Indignantly)

Why not?

Delilah

'Cause it 'Taint etiquette, fool.

Jericho

(Taking a quick gulp)

Den duh hell wid it.

Randall

(Stopping him)

Wait uh minute, maybe we kin drink tuh somethin' else.

Jericho

(Stopping)

Whut? (Eagerly)

Randall

Well-- lessee

(Casting his eye around)

We kin drink to duh ladies -- de best looking in Hahlem-- Clotile an' Mis' Delilah.

Jericho

(Starting to drink)

Okay.

Randall
(Raising his glass)
To duh best lookin' gals in Hahlem-- Mis Delilah an' Clotile.
(They drink)

Clotile
But dat makes Delilah an' me go dry!
(They all laugh)

Delilah
Das right. Les drink to our gues' -- Randall Johnson, who dey say, always pays off.

Randall
(Beaming)
Dat sho is uh nice compliment, comin' from you.

Jericho
Hol' on, ah needs me some mo' likkuh-- ah done used up duh las fo' de yuhtur toas'.

Delilah
(Pouring him a small drink)
You mus(be uh camel, yuh drink so fas, an' kin hol so much.
(They drink)

Horace
(Briskly setting down glass)
Come on, it's time tuh go, we got uh long way tuh drive.

Uppity
Das right, c'mon Jericho les git goin'.

Jericho
(Sinking back in chair)
Aw whuts duh rush. Les' wait uh lil wile.

Delilah
Now come on you-- Dis time you ain't gonna do no stallin'
Ah done got you yo things all packed. Dey in duh baid room.

Jericho
(Raising slowly)
Awright den, pick 'em up, will yuh Uppity?

Uppity
(Goes off, L.)
Okay.

Horace
(Turning to Clotile)
So long, honey. You comin' up wid Delilah on Sunday?

Clotile
(Kissing him)
Sho.

Delilah
How we gonna git dere, ef you take duh car?

Horace
You kin' come up by train, an take duh car back, can't yuh?

Randal

(Xing over)

Ef' you'll allow me, I'll be glad tuh drive de ladies up.
Maybe Jericho 'll want his car tuh take uh little drive, up dere.

Jericho

Swell. We'll have uh party. Dat sho is nice of yuh, Randall.

Randall

(Turning to Delilah)

Is dat okay wid you, Mis' Delilah.

Delilah

(Looking at him)

Sure. That's uh good ideah.
(Uppity reappears with bags)

Jericho

(X's over and takes Delilah in his arms)

So long mommuh. Ah sho will miss yuh, babeh. Doan fo'git tuh come up earleh.

Delilah

(Perfunctorily kissing him)

Okay. An behave yo'self, dis ain't no time fo' foolin'.
Yuh gottah train -- an train hahd, you heah me?

Jericho

(Nods)

Sho, Sho. Les go.

Horace

(Starting out)

Goodbye. See you all Sunday.

Uppity

(Exciting)

So long.

Randall

(Picking up hat)

I spose I outta be goin' too.

Delilah

(Quickly)

You ain't in trainin' is you? Whyn't you stay awhile-- an keep me and clotile company?

Randall

(Turning back)

Well-- now dats real nice of you-- ef you sure ah wouldn't be intrudin'.

Jericho

Das uh good ideah, Randal-- somebodeh gotuh finish dat bottle, not dat ah won' be in duh house. So long, honey, ah'll be seein yuh.

(He starts out. Stops)

Say-- is you pack my rabbits foot?

Delilah

(Bored)

Hits in duh pocket of your bath robe.

Jericho

(Xing to her)

Okay. Kiss me, agin, fer luck, Honey.

(They kiss he exits)

Delilah

(Looking after him)

Luck hell, das fo dough.

(Turning to Randall

Will you have another drink?

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

AT RISE: The dressing room of a fight club in New York city; the place is bare, except for a few lockers, benches and hard backed chairs. Scattered about the room are buckets, etc., several small stools can be seen, standing in the corner. There is a rubbing table down right, almost center stage. Up back an entrance leads to a corridor. There are doors, right and left, leading to a shower and another room. At rise the stage is empty. After a moment the door opens and Delilah accompanied by Randal Johnson, enters.

Delilah

(Entering and looking around)

Look like dey ain' com' yet.

Randall

(Following her into the room and closing the door)

Why does dey come in so early?

Delilah

(Contemptuously)

Oh! Jericho got tuh have er little nap. Dat guy is de sleepinist thing ah evah did see.

Randall

Yo' know, Delilah, I always did wondah at a swell gal like you takin' up wid a country boy like that.

Delilah

Did yo'?

Randall

Yeah. I nevah could figgah it out. De only thing ah could see, dat you figgered he was a good thing, and you was gonna git yours-- whilst de gittin' was good.

Delilah

Yeah?

Randall

Yeah. Case baby, a sweet momma like you, ain' gonna waste time on nobody like dat Jericho.

Delilah

(Provocatively)

What kinda man you reckon ah'm gonna waste time on?

Randall

A man like me

Delilah

Why you?

Randall

(Moving closer to her)

Cause ah'm yo' kind. I gambles, high, wide and handsome. I bin places-- seen things.

Delilah
What kinda things?

Randall
(Moving closer to her)
All kinds. But nevah nuthin' so nice as you.
(He sweeps her into his arms and kisses her)

Delilah
(After a moment, pulling away)
look out Randall, somebodeh might come in.

Randall
(Passionately)
Let 'em. Babeh, ah'm crazeah about you.
(Pause)
An you crazeah about me.

Delilah
How does you know that?

Randall
(Confidently)
Doan't you think I bin' watchin' you fer er long time?
Don't you think I bin' seein' dat you was gittin' fed up
wid dat big flat foot hick de canebrakes.
(He grabs her again)
Ain't dat right, sugah?

Delilah
You seem to know all the answers.

Randall
Sure I does. Look baby, I bin hookin' for a smart gal like
you all of my life. Why honey if we pooled our brains, they
ain't nothin' kin stop us. We'd have the whole world in a jug.

Delilah
Yeah-- how?

Randall
Look sugar, I'm crazy 'bout you. You know that, don't you?
And you're crazy 'bout me-- I knows that. Now all we need is
a stake. A real one. Then we can settle down. Take life easy.
You kin quit this racketin' around with cheap prizefighters
and break into the big time. You do love me don't you?

Delilah
You're right Randall. I'm crazy 'bout you. I ain't never
loved nobody like you.

Randall
(Exultantly)
I knowed it. The minute I laid eyes on you I knowed you was my kind.

Delilah
You kin have me baby-- or anything I got.
(She breaks away from him)
But we got to be careful

Careful? Why? Randall

Count o' Jericho. Delilah

 Randall
(Hurt)
I thought you said you loved me?

 Delilah
I do. Thass why we gotta be careful. He'd bust you in two.

 Randall
(Laughing and patting his pocket)
Doan worry 'bout dat. Ah got er little buster mahse'f babeh.

 Delilah
Yeah, but if ah evah lef dat guy, all er Hahlem would be aftuh me. Dey things he's ole man Chris' hisse'f.

 Randall
(Stopping a moment)
Das right. Dey do. But ah gotah little scheme.

 Delilah
What?

 Randall
Is you game to tak' er chance?

 Delilah
On what?

 Randall
On me.

 Delilah
Ah bin takin' chances on yuh, daddy, lovin' yuh dis way.

 Randall
Den lissen babeh. Ah gotta ah ideah. But ah needs you to help me carry it out.

 Delilah
Whut is it?

 Randall
Dis fight is jus' a setup for dat boy, ain't it?

 Delilah
Das right. He sho' does figger to win. Deh ain' nuthin' kin stop him but death.

 Randall
(Shortly)
An us.

Delilah
Whut yo' mean,-- an us?

Randall
He figgers to win, don' he? An' all Hahlem's goin' to town on him, ain' it? Well, sposin' he was to lose de fight? He wouldn't be sech a big shot den, would he?

Delilah
Das right, but he ain' gonna lose.

Randall
Not unless we fixes it.

Delilah
How?

Randall
You git him to throw de fight.

Delilah
Ah den whut?

Randall
Look babeh. If he throws de fight-- an we knows it, we kin clean up. De wildcat is carryin' de shawt price tuhnight, an' we kin git almos' anythin' fo' ouh moneh.

Delilah
(Puzzeled)
But sposin' he do-- How does yo' an I come in?

Randall
Well, wid a pocket full of sugah, we begins tuh give out de word dat he lay down. Das why yo' lef him. Yo' wouldn't stay wid nobodeh dat'd throw uh fight. Why, aftuh goin' broke on him, Hahlem'll run 'im back to hell an' gone!

Delilah
Maybe yo' right?

Randall
I knows ah's right. Why mommuh, we can't miss.
(He pulls a roll of money out of his pocket)
Look! Ah got er lot of heavy sugah we kin git down on duh Wildcat at er fancy price.

Delilah
(Whistles)
Where'd you git all dat.

Randall
(Expansively)
Mos' of its mine. But part of it belongs to dem big shot bamblehs down town.

Delilah
(Interested)
Whut you doin' wid it?

Randall

(Grandly)

Deh bets de way ah tell 'em.

Delilah

(Walking over to him and kissing him)

Boy yo' sho' is cute. (reaching into her stocking)
How 'bout bettin' some for me, since we 're partners.

Randall

(Taking her money)

We're more than that baby. We're the team that's gonna parlay
a slew-footed prizefighter into a bankroll bigger than the
Empire State.

(Reaching for her)

C'mere to me.

(He gives her a long kiss)

Delilah

An you're the first man I ever loved enough to trust.

(Breaks away)

Goddam if this ain't sweet. I'll git rid of that trained ape
and clean up, besides.

Randall

(Sweeps her into his arms)

Sho' will, babeh. An it'll be me an' you, aftuh dat.

(He kisses her again)

Delilah

(Pushing him away, and breathing heavily)

You bettah stop dat, now poppah, cause ah gottah think.

Randall

(Eagerly)

But kin you git him to throw de fight?

Delilah

(Contemptuously)

Ah got what he wants, an' to git it, he'll roll ovah an'
play dead.

Randall

(Laughing)

De man got tas'e in one respec'.

Delilah

How 'bout de Wildcat?

Randall

I don seen 'im. Its all fix. He's willin' to play wid us.
But--- how 'bout Horace?

Delilah

(Contemptuously)

Ah does de managin' 'round here. Horace jus' a front.

(There is a noise in the hall)

Look out, here dey come.

(The door is flung open and Jericho accompanied by Horace and Uppity strides in)

Jericho

Hello, Sugah. Yuh sho' hyeah earleh.

Delilah

(Negligently)

Yeah. I wanted tuh see if you was in good shape.

Jericho

De bes ah evah bin. Dat boy won't las' no time. Hello Randall.

Randall

Hyuh boy? I come in to' see how yuh look, befo' I puts mah money down.

Jericho

(Confidently)

Yo' c'n staht countin' yo winnin's son, cause de Wildcat gonna take erlong res', aftuh de firs' roun'.

Horace

Das de truf, Randall. Dis man bin usin' up sparrin' partners by de cawload.

Uppity

(Coming down)

C'mon Jericho, yuh gottuh git some res'.

Randall

(Moving to door)

Well, ah be clearin' out den. So long, Jericho. Ah'll be seein' yo'.

Horace

Wait a minute, Randall, Ah'll go wid yo'. Jericho gonna take er little sleep annyhow.

Uppity

Me too. Ah'm gonna git me sompin' tuh eat.

Jericho

(Laughing)

Das de eatinist man ah evah did see. Das all he do-- is eat.

(Turning to Delilah)

Doan' leave yet, babeh. Ah ain' seen yuh fo' so long, ah'm crazeh wid lonesomeness.

(The three men begin to exit)

Randall

See yuh aftuh de fight. Goodnight Miss Delilah.

Horace

Doan stay up too long, Jericho.

Uppity

(Warningly)

Watch yo' sef, Champ.

(Exit)

Jericho

(Dancing around)

Hot damm. Ah sho feels good. Dat trainin' is uh pain an' uh tribulashun. Uh man doan git no time tuh pleasuh 'isse'f.

Delilah

Das all yo' thing about. Pleasurin' yose'f.

Jericho

(Contemptuously)

Hell! Ah kep tellin' Horace ah didn't need tuh train so hahd fo' dis boy-- he's too easeah. Das de hahdes! Haided man ah evah did see. Keep yellin' 'bout, ah had tuh be in baid earleh. Lak ah was some babeh chile.

(Sitting on the edge of the table)

C'mere sugah.

Delilah

(Coming over slowly)

Yo' bettah cut out dis foolishness. Yo' gottah fight on yo' hans.

Jericho

Whut de hell diffunce dat make? God dam' babeh, ah sho' did miss yuh. How come yuh didn't come see me mo'?

Delilah

(Sullenly)

Ah was busyeh.

Jericho

(Guffawing)

Busyeh? What de hell yo' got tuh be so buseh erbout? Spendin' money, an' cabahretin',-- das whut.

Delilah

(Definitely)

Well--Sposin' ah was.

Jericho

Hell, ah doan' kyeer sugah. Spen' all yo' wants. Das whut hits fur. Dese two fisses kin make plenteh mo' fo' yuh. Das whut dey fer. But ah did miss yuh, honey.

Delilah

Yas. Das whut dey all says.

Jericho

(Laughing)

Lissen honey, Aftuh dis fight ah ain't gonna fight no mo' fo' er long time. Ah'm gonna take me er good res'. How 'bout me and you goin' back to my home town an' building the church like you said?

Delilah

Where yo' gonna git all de dough to do dat?

Jericho

Shux. Ain' we makin' ernoff fum dis fight? Wen we gits broke, we'll come back, and den ah'll fight again'.

Delilah

Das whut yo' think. Ev'rytime yo' gits two dolluhs in yo' pocket, yo' git drunk rich. We ain't gonna have so much lef, aftuh we takes care of Horace, an' de trainin' camp ixpenses.

Jericho

(Smiling)

Oh. Oh. Dere she go again. Yellin' foh mo dough. Mo8 dough. Mo' dough!

Delilah

Yas, because ah'm de one got tuh manage it. You don't think all dis struttin up and down Lenix Avenue in a new suit evah day, buyin' dem graftin' guys drinks doan cost dough? Hell, yo' easeh.

Jericho

Ah'm easeh fo' yo', babeh.

Delilah

(Suddenly)

Look-- ah got er little proposishun dat'll make us mo' dough on dis fight.

Jericho

(Surprised)

You has. Whuts dat?

Delilah

De Wildcat made us proposishun.

Jericho

(Surprised)

De Wildcat!

Delilah

Sure. Now look. He's carryin' de shawt price, cause yo' figgers to win. Now ef you was to lay down, and we was to bet seccutly on de Wildcat, we could clean up. And en you could take un real res'.

Jericho

(Amazed)

Honey, yo' ain' ser'us, is yuh?

Delilah

(Nonchalantly)

Why not? Yuh wants dough, don't yo'? And aftuh dat we git anuther match wid do Wildcat-- wid him carryin' de long price-- an' dat time yo' give him de works. An' we cleans twice.

Jericho

(Shaking his head slowly)

Delilah, dis doan soun' lak yo' tawkin.

Delilah

Well, it is me. An wid my own good mouth. Ah done tole him we do it.

Jericho

(Flaring up)

You whut?

Delilah

(Defiantly)

Ah tole him de deal wuz okay.

Jericho

(Indignantly)

You crazeh wooman. Ah ain't layin' down fo' nobodeh.

Delilah

Yo's doin' whut ah tells yo!

Jericho

Look. YO' mus' be nuts. Yo' think ah'm thowin' away mah good repertashun---

Delilah

(Derisively)

Whut de hell yo' tawkin' 'bout! Yo' good repertashun. Evvey thing you is, you is account o' me.

Jericho

(Holding out his hands)

Ah guess yo' sits on dese two fisses an' tells meh when tuh hit?

Delilah

Naw. But ah picks who tuh hit. An' dats mo' impotent. Now ah'm tellin' yo' when tuh stop hittin'-- an' dats tonight!

Jericho

(Stubbornly)

Now lookayere, Delilah, Doan staht dat! 'Cause ah ain't layin' down to no Wil'Cat.

Delilah

Lissen tuh me. Evvy thing you owns in dis worl' ah gotcha. I made you--an' by God, if you don't do like I tells yo' I'll unmake you.

Jericho

Wooman you mus be thinkin' yo' God Almighty.

Delilah

I don't have to be to be your boss. Ah'm runnin' things 'roun' yere.

Jericho

(Emphatically, shaking his head)

Not dis time. Ah ain' layin' down.

Delilah
Yous doin' lak ah tells yo'.

Jericho
Tain't no use awguin' wid meh, Delilah, ah ain' gonna do it.

Delilah
(Rising)
Well-- Okay. Das dat. So long big boy.
(Starting to go)

Jericho
(Suspiciously)
Whar' you goin'?

Delilah
Whuts dat tuh you?

Jericho
(Placatingly)
Aw honey doan be dat way.

Delilah
(Venomously)
Look' out-- lemme pass. Take er good look, big boy, dis de las time yo' gonna see me.

Jericho
(Detaining her)
Aw honey, lissen, ah can't throw de fight. All dem people up in Hahlem is bettin' on me. Ah can't do 'em no trick like dat.

Delilah
(Turning on him)
Whut de hell did dey evan do fo' yo', 'ceptin' drink yo' likkuh an' borrow dough? But God dammit, I went to the front for yuh, invested mah hahed earned dough tuh git yuh stahted. An' now, when I aske yuh tuh de er little thing like dis-- yo' quits. An' why, cause yo' big haid is so swole up wid yer own impotance its a wondah it don bus'. Well, go haid down throw de fight. Let de guys roun' Hahlem run aftuh yuh pluckin' at yo' coat tails hollerin' "Champ". But yo' gonna be walkin' alone, cause dis gal is thoo.
(She wrenches away from him and starts to exit.
He rushes to stop her)

Jericho
Honey-- you jokin' yuh doan mean it.

Delilah
Lemme pass.

Jericho
(Detaining her)
Aw babe, wait-- doan go honey. Delilah, sugah. You wouldn't walk out on me lak dis. Ah'd be los' widout yuh.

Delilah
You doan need me no mo. You knows all de ansuhs yo'se'f. Go.haid. Git outta mah way.

Jericho

(Pleading)

Babeh, ah can't. Ah can't let you go dis way.

Delilah

Yuh knows how tuh keep me.

Jericho

(Protesting)

But shux, ah wouldn't be able to look pepul in face aftuh ah done 'em a trick like dat. An' made 'em lose all dey dough.

Delilah

How 'bout all de moneh you won 'em already. An' how 'bout us.

Jericho

(Pleading)

Ah know-- but honey.

Delilah

Well come on den, lemme go.

Jericho

(Wildly)

No. No. Ah can't do dat, either.

Delilah

(Feeling her victory)

C'mon ole babeh boy, make up yo' min'. Whats it gonna be? Thowin' de fight an' me-- or winnin' widout me?

Jericho

(Looking into her face and reading her determination)

O.K. you wins. What roun' mus' ah lay down in?

Delilah

(Stops a moment)

De foth.

Jericho

(Dully)

How 'bout Horace?

Delilah

(Viciously)

Keep yo' mouth shet tuh him. What he doan know, doan' hurt him. An' rembah, ef you fo'gits-- dis woman is gonna be long gone.

Jericho

Doan' worreh.

Delilah

Ah got tuh go an git down some bets. Ah'll see yo' aftuh de fight.

Jericho

O.K. (She exits. He sits for a moment with his head

Jericho (continued)
(in hands. Slowly he peels off his coat.
Reaches heavily down to untie a shoe. He
sighs. There is a knock on the door.

Jericho

(Dully)

Who dere?

Voice

There's a man out here to see Jericho Tucker.

Jericho

Who he?

Voice

He say his name is Eddy Taylor. He says he's from his
home town.

Jericho

(Jumping up delightedly)

Eddeh.

(He runs to the door)

Boy! Come in yeah!

(Eddy enters. He is very dark and small.
He wears a derby and appears confused.
He grins embarrassedly. In his hand he
carries the Bible we have seen in Act 1.)

Eddy

Howdy, Jer'cho.

Jericho

(Pounding him on back)

Eddeh. God damm! Ah'm glad tuh see yuh. Whut duh hell yuh
doin' way up heah?

Eddy

(Twisting his hat)

Ah comed tuh see yuh fight!

Jericho

(Amazedly)

Yuh mean tuh tell me dat you come all dis way tuh see me fight?

Eddy

Sho did.

Jericho

Well ah'll be damm! Boy! Ah sho am glad tuh see yuh. Ah
bin so lonesome fo' somebodeh fum home, ah could bus' out cryin'.

Eddy

(Simply)

Yeah? We missed you too.

Jericho

(Eagerly)

How is evvabodeh? How's mah Paw?

Eddy
Prouder'm Pouter Pigeon.

Jericho
'Bout who?

Eddy
'Bout you!

Jericho
You mean tuh say he ain' mad at me no mo! He ain' mad
at me fo' comin up yeah an fightin'?

Eddy
Mad?

(He laughs)
Das all dat ole man tawk erbout, you an yo' fightin. He say
duh Lawd gived yuh all dat strenk. Looka yeah
(He holds out the bible)
Look whut he sent yuh.

Jericho
(Takes it slowly, reverently)
Duh bibul! Duh bibul dat he preach duh word fum for fawty yeahs!

Eddy
Yas suh, dats duh one. Tole me tuh fin' yuh an' tell yuh dat
yuh lef' home so quick yuh mustta fohgot hit.

Jericho
Dis duh bibul dat he snatch outta mah han de night he give
me hell in de dance hall! Dis de bibul de folks down in
Fayette say got uh spell on it. Dat kin wuk miracles!

Eddy
Das de one-- an boy ah sho am glad tuh git shet uh dat thing.
Ah sho wouldn't res' easy wid dat thing hangin' roun!

Jericho
Shux dis duh bes' luck thing in duh worl' ef mah paw give it
to yuh. Wid dis thing in mah han' ah can't lose.

Eddy
You ain' los yet, is yuh-- an yuh didn' have it wid yuh.

Jericho
Nope-- but now-- ah sho do feel bettah havin' this swo'd
by mah side.

Eddy
Yas, dat an yo' paws prayers. Why boy evah time you goes in
into duh ring yo' paw prays fo' yo'.

Jericho
(Turning)
He do?

Eddy
Sho do. Dat man ain' missed uh fight yet, wid his praying
and his call'n on duh Lawd fo' yuh.

Jericho

(Striding up and down the room)

So das hit! So das hit!

Eddy

Whuts hit?

Jericho

Oh Eddeh dis is uh sign. Uh sign fum mah Lawd and mah Paw. Hit wuz mah paws prayers win all dese fights. Ah knowed hit wuz sompin' lak dat.

Eddy

How come yuh know dat.

Jericho

(Looking around)

Ah ain' tole none of dese people up yere-- Citeh folks wouldn't ondehstan'. But evvy time ah climbs into de ring ah heahs er voice whisperin'. Okay son, yuh gonna win. An ah does!

Eddy

(Awe-stricken)

Mah Gawd, yo' bin hearin' speerits.

Jericho

(Jumping up)

Ah bin byearin' mah paws voice-- das whut. An duh Lawd Almighty sent yuh tuh tell me jus' in time!

Eddy

(Indignantly)

Whut yuh mean duh Lawd-- Ah took and won dis travelin' money in uh crap game!

Jericho

(Quickly)

Dat doan' make no diffunce. De Lawd has got mahstyros ways. Lissen, befo' yo' walk in here ternight, ah was gonna thow de fight, cause Delilah devul meh intuh it. She was gonna quit me ef ah didn't. But yous uh sign! A sign fum Jesus an' mah Paw!

Eddy

(Horror stricken)

Boy yuh can't thow dat fight. Why, all dem people back in Fayette is bettin' dere las nickel on yuh.

Jericho

(Firmly)

Ah knows dat. Yous right. An ah ain' gonna. Delilah er no Delilah.

Eddy

But whut yuh gonna tell her?

Jericho

(Thinking a moment, then reaching into
his trousers)

Moneh tawk wid dat wooman. Moneh an nuthin' else but. See
dis dough. She doan know ah got dat, fur signin' sompin'
dat ah lak tuh smoke somkin' er nuther cigarettes. Now look
eddy. Yo' take dis dough an' git out in dat gran' stan an'
pick me up some bets. Hang roun' de gate, whar' de big
shots'll be--

Eddy

How ah'm gonna know tuh bet wid who?

Jericho

(Stopping a moment)

Das right. Ah'll fix dat up. Ah'll have Horace sen' someone
wid yuh tuh pint out de big gambluhs.

(He goes to the door and calls)

Horace! Horace!

Horace

(Running in)

Whuts de mattuh?

Jericho

(Besides himself with happiness)

Ain' nuthin' wrong. Evvything right. Look, dis is mah fren'
Edder, fum down home. He comed all dis way tuh see me knock
duh Wil'cat end ovah appertite tuhnite.

Horace

(Huffily)

Is dat all? Howdy eddy.

Jericho

(Laughing)

Das mo'n yuh know. Look Horace, take dis boy an' pint out de
big shot gambluh tuh him. He wants tuh do er little bettin'.
An' give him er pass tuh git back heah, aftuh de fight.

Horace

(Protestingly)

Hell Jer'cho. De newspaper boys'll be back here an' we
won't have no room---

Jericho

(Firmly patient)

Give duh boy er pass lak ah tole yuh. Dis yer is mah bes'
fren'. He comed carryin' me duh bes message ah evah had.

Horace

Okay. Ah'm glad it was good news.

Jericho

Good news! It was uh hol' brass band eh angels, playin' swing it.
(Jericho puts bible under pillow and lies down)

CURTAIN

JERICHO
ACT 2 SCENE 3

TIME: Night

SCENE: The exterior of the general store in Jericho's home town. All that can be seen of the store is the porch, which runs back diagonally up left. Upright posts hold a sagging roof over the porch, a flight of wide steps leads to the porch. A dusty road winds up to, and past the steps. The scene is lit only by yellow, mellow light streaming from windows of the store, and a few oil lamps hung on the posts. At rise, we see a group of negroes about the store. Some of them loll about, others lean on posts, etc. One leans against the jam of the door. A small knot of them are clustered around a radio set, which emits squawks, music, etc.

Blue Gum

(To man fooling with radio)
Lemme see kin ah wuk duh thing!

Tom

(As radio plays some music)
Oh! Oh! yuh done got some music--

Blue Gum

Ah ain' comed all dis way tuh heah no music. Come on boy, see kain't yuh fin' out sompin 'bout duh fight.

Joo

(At set)
Ah'm doin' de bes' ah kin.

Wooman

Ah bet dat boy gonna be skeered tuh def' front o' all dem wite folks.

Blue Gum

(Indignantly)
Who! Jericho? Dat boy ain' skeered o' nuthin. Ah seen Mist' Chahllly Jonson dis mawnin', an' he say dat boy gonna be champion of de worl' some day.

Woman

Whut Mr. Jonson know, he tawk so big?

Blue Gum

(Amazed)
Whut Mist' Jonson know? He say wen' he wuz up Nawth, das all dey tawks erbout is Jer'co.

(Radio set lets out a squawk

Joe

(impatiently)
Dis thing is uh pain an' uh tribulashion. 24

Blue Gum

Lemme see kin ah do somepin' wif it.

Tom

Go haid Joe, leave Blue Gum, tampun' wid it uh wile.

Joe

(Resigning his place)

Go haid ole haid haid. Bus' de thing, effen yuh wantstuh.

Wooman

Lookout, yeah come Pastuh Tucker.

Blue Gum

(Tinkering with set)

Hesh up all dat tawkin'. Ah gotta yeah what ah'm doin'.

Radio

(After a few squawks)

And so, ladies and gentlemen, we ah all set for the main event of the evening---

Blue Gum

(Proudly)

Dar she is, ah tole yuh lemme see kin ah do it

(The ANNOUNCER continues in an undertone as the other characters comment)

Joe

Hesh up, ole loud mouf an' leave us yeah duhman.

-a fight that promises to be one of the most exciting battles ever staged in the East.

Announcer

The fifteen round bout between Jericho Tucker, pride of the South, and idol of Harlem, and Wildcat Thompson, that tearing, slashing, heavyweight from the plains. These two boys are right on edge. (It wont be long before the fight is under way) and)

(The men around the radio draw closer, the Pastor stands in the road an isolated figure)

Tom

Lawd, ah sho hopes dat boy wins. Ah bet mah las buck on 'im.

(Announcer continuing)

There's been very little betting on this fight because these boys are so evenly matched. The Wildcat has looked better em in training than he has looked in his long career in the ring.

Blue Gum

Doan worreh 'bout dat. Dat bucks ez good as in duh bank.

Announcer

I wish you could all see this sight. Fifty thousand people are packed into this huge bowl--

Joe

Mah Gawd-- Dat shuah is eh mess eh peopul!

(Announcer continuing in undertone) They're crowded into every nook and corner of the place. Some of them have been here since before noon, struggling to get into this arena just to be withas to this promised all time classis of the squared ring.

Blue Gum

Hesh up, iggnunt, and let the man tawk.

Announcer

Little pin points of light can be seen stretching away into the darkness. Every now and then, far off there one flares up, and you know that a brother in the bleachers is lighting a cigarette. The ringside is filled with leaders from all walks of life. Stage, screen, radio and business stars are represented. The political life of the nation is sitting here. Party lines and ambitions forgotten in anticipation of this great fight.

(A roar from the crowd)

(The announcer's voice grows more excited)

The Wildcat just came into the ring. He looks great. We're waiting for Jericho now. The crowd is impatient, eager for it to begin.

(Another loud roar from the crowd)

Jericho is just climbing into the ring. He is followed by his manager Horace Williams, smoking his inevitable 'seegar.

Blue Gum

Uh! Uh!

Joe

(Impatiently)

Hesh up, ole loud mouf'.

(Announcer continuing)

The Wildcat is sitting in his corner, smiling confidently and waving at his friends at the ringside.

Announcer

The photographers are in the ring taking the boys' pictures. Just a minute, they're introducing someone. I'll switch you up to the ringside so you can get it.

(A far away voice cries, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Heavyweight Champion of the Woild, K.O. Rothstein.")

That was K.O. Rothstein, ladies and gentlemen, the champion of the world. The photographers have finished and they're clearing the ring. The referee is calling the boys to the center of the ring for final instructions. Jericho has just taken off a magnificent bathrobe all done in scarlet and white and he looks wonderful.

Pastor

(Beginning to pray)

Oh Lawd, help mah po' boy terhight. Help him Lawd, cause his daddy ain' wid 'im, an' he needs yuh Lawd.

(Announcer continuing)

He looks like a man who knows he has a tough job ahead of him and is ready for it. The Wildcat is bracing himself against the ropes eagerly awaiting the bell that will send him forth to victory or defeat.

Announcer

Stand by now, the big fight is almost ready to begin.

Pastor

Help 'im Lawd; put strenk in his ahms, and courage in his hahat. Ah wuz wrong Lawd tuh let 'im go wid anguh in his heaht Lawd. He needs yuh Lawd, Doan

(Announcer continuing)

Wait a minute Jericho's manager is conferring with one of the judges who in turn is calling over Whitey Gordon the referee and the referee has just called time;

Pastor (continuing)
fo' sake yuh son in his
houh--

(Announcer continuing)
I imagine it has something to do with
last minute adjustments of Jericho's
fighting togs, and very shortly the
fight will be----

Announcer
(With suppressed excitement in his voice)
Ladies and gentlemen! Jericho, that simple man from the South,
is kneeling in his corner, his hands uplifted, praying to his
God for victory!

Pastor
(In a louder voice)
Lif' 'is han' Lawd, so
dat he might smite duh
philustine. You's in 'is
hahat Lawd! He done yeered yuh
call tuh 'im. Git in his ahms,
Lawd. Lead 'im lak yuh led
duh chillun of Izzel outta
bondage intuh duh promise Lan'.

(Announcer continuing)
There is laughter in the bleachers.
This is a new sight to some of the
ring crowd but the old timers are
remembering the late Tiger Flowers.
Some of the fans are hooting, there
is an impatient shuffling of feet,
but Jericho kneels in his corner
his arms outstretched in silent
prayer. A stillness is stealing
over the arena. The crowd realizes
now by this man's earnestness that
this is no publicity gag.

Announcer
This huge crowd is silent out of deference to this man's tremendous
faith. Jericho, the man who knows that without God's help, his
cause is lost, has cast a spell over this huge multitude. The
crowd is hushed---silent---

Pastor
Give him yo' strenk, Lawd,
he callin' on yuh. Help him
tuh win Lawd, and den, make
him come on home tuh see 'is
ole daddy. Ah's loneleh Lawd.
Loneleh in mah ole age. Yous'
punished meh fo' mah pride in
yuh, an' mah haughty ways an'
luv' of yuh. Ah fo'got dat ah
was duh shepe'd an' shudda led
mah boyeh---

(Announcer continuing)
In the next few moments we will
pause for station identification.
-----This is station WXXY of the
Capitol Broadcasting Chain. We are
bringing you this fight through the
courtesy of the makers of that
invincible champion of the road the
1937 Biarritz special. The car
car that has the flash that is needed
to make a champion, the endurance of
a marathon runner and the speed of
the 100 yard dash.-----Here we are
back in the Bowl, ladies and gentle-
men. Jericho is just rising from
his communion with his God and the
fight will be on in just a matter of
seconds. The crowd is leaning for-
ward as one man, waiting for the bell
that will send these two men teating
into each other like two devastating
instruments of death.

Announcer

This is the most impressive thing I've ever seen. People way back in the twelfth row are talking in whispers. Listen closely. The only thing to be heard is the clatter of the pressmen's typewriters as they flash this great human story to their papers.

(We hear the excited, impatient clatter of telegraph keys and typewriters)

Pastor

Ah'm old, an' ah'm weareh.
An' ah'll so'n be comin' home
to yuh Lawd. Lemme see 'im befo'
dat angul call. Lemme see 'im
mah boy, Lawd Befo' dat trumpet
blow.

(Thru the loudspeaker we hear the insistent clamoring of the bell, calling 'time' there is a mighty roar from the crowd. The announcer's voice grows more excited. The scene begins to black out, and house lights begin to come on, slowly)

Pastor

(Sinking to his knees)

Ouah fatheh who art in heaben,
Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom
come, thy will be done----

(Announcer continuing)

This is a fight in which anything can happen. Jericho has everything to win by eradicating the Wildcat. The Wildcat will help himself very much if he can succeed in exploding this mythical phantom from the South. Both boys are standing in their corners waiting for the bell.--

(Announcer continuing)

-And there's the bell! Both boys dash to the center of the ring. Jericho leads with a left. The Wildcat ducks. He's short with a right to the body. The Wildcat leads with a left. Jericho is in close, with short chopping blows to the jaw. He's following the Wildcat from pillar to post battering him mercilessly with those cruel jabbing lefts and rights to the body to the fact to the midsection.

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

The living room of the home of Delilah and Jericho, in New York City.

The room is furnished with an eye to gaudiness, rather than anything else. There are red fringed lamps about, sofa, chairs, etc. A window is u.b., it looks out on the street. A door to the hall is r.s., another door up L., leads to a bedroom, door u.p.c.r., leads to the kitchen. At rise, the stage is deserted. There is a lamp burning near a chair. A key is heard in the lock. Jericho enters with Eddy, Horace, and Uppity.

Jericho

(Looking around)

(Calling Delilah)

Look lak she out.

Horace

'Course she out-- she waitin' in the Sweet Time Cabaret, lak ah tole yuh. C'mon.

Jericho

(Sits)

Lawd-- ah sho am tired-- dat fightin' business is a pain!

Uppity

(Anxiously)

Whuts de mattuh yuh nevah usta git tired.

Jericho

(Wearily)

Oh, dey ain' nuthin' de mattuh Uppity-- Ah jes wants tuh take a little res' -- das all.

Horace

Whuts th' mattuh with yo'. Boy, does you realize dat winnin' to-night make us big shots in Nahlem?

Jericho

Uh huh-- say Horace, wen does we collect deh money fo' de fight?

Horace

Soons as dey counts up-- in a couple er days-- What de mattuh-- is yo' gittin' lak Delilah. Thinkin' 'bout money all de time?

Eddy

(Who has been wandering around, looking admiringly at the apartment)

Say Jer'co dis is er place! Doan look like dat little bunglerlow yo' usta live in wid yo' paw. Mansuh, look dat Mardi Gras Lamp!

Jericho

Look Horace, sposin' yo' an Uppity go on tuh duh Cabarat-- ah wants tuh tawk tuh Eddy uh little-- we'll come on aftuh yuh latuh!

Horace

Hell, whut yo' got tuh tawk erbout, on uh night lak dis? Dem people is waitin' fo' yuh. Dey gonna raise hell ef yuh doan show up.

Jericho

Das all right-- Me an' Eddeh got er lot to tawk ovah-- 'bout de home folks-- go haid Horace, we be wid yuh in eh little wile.

Horace

(Rising)

Okay-- but doan be too long. G'mon Uppity.

(Uppity rises and accompanies Horace to the door)

Jericho

So long, ah'll be seein' yuh in er 'bout half hour. An Horace-- ef Delilah ax yo' whar' I am-- tell her ah'll be erlong latuh!

Horace

O.K. An lissen-- ef dose newspaper boys show up yere-- yuh keep yo' mouth shut. Remembah yo' does de fightin' an' ah does de tawkin'.

Jericho

Set down Eddy-- an res' yo' sef.

Eddy

(Feeling into his pockets)

Hol' on-- ah ain' gived yuh all dat dough dat yuh won fum de bets!

(He hauls out a fistful of money)

Mansuh-- ah ain' never seen so many bucks in all mah life.

Whar' yo' reckon dem people git all dat money?

Jericho

(Laughing)

Shux, boy dat ain' money-- das just chicken feed in dis mans-town. Dem big gambluhs is deh one wid bucks--

(Chuckles)

Ah bet dey clean 'em a mess eh moneh on dis fight, tonight.

Eddy

(Smoothing out bills)

Look at dis sweet William hundred dollah bill! Boy! Does yuh know, but das de firs' hundred dollah bill ah evah did see-- an ah ain' thought ah would evah see one!

Jericho

(Handing it to him)

Hyar Eddy, yuh bettah take some of dis-- cause wen Delilah git her hans' on it-- it gonna be long gone.

Eddy

(Overtaken with surprise)

But boy, dis is uh hundred dollahs!

Jericho

Dat ain' much in dis paht of deh country. Yuh kin spen' dat in uh night an' still be er little shot.

Eddy

Not me! Look out, dis money done made me fum uh sparrer in-tuh uh Eagle an' ah sho gonna fly! But-- whut de hell Delilah gonna say, yo' passin' all dese bucks onto me?

Jericho

Das jus' whut got me worred. Whut de hell Delilah gonna say-- She gonna be so' as hell 'bout ne not thow in dat fight!

Eddy

Oh. Oh. Ah done fo'got dat mahse'f.

Jericho

(Sighing)

Sweet Jesus-- dat woman sho is a pain sometime!

Eddy

(Philosophically)

All winnins is pains. Look Jer'ce whyn't yo' tell her yuh kinda fo'got!

Jericho

Oh. Oh. Dat wouldn't go. Dey ain' no fo'gittin wid dat woman.

Eddy

Is dat whut got yo' so worried?

Jericho

Uh huh. Das why ah comed yere. 'steaduh goin' tuh de cabaret. Ah knowed she wouldn't be yere.

Eddy

Whut yo' reckon she doin'?

Jericho

Ah doan know-- but man, yuh kin bet yo' Great Gawd hits plen-tah. Ah sho' got tuh think me up somethin'.

(There's the sound of a key in the door.)

Jericho jumps up)

Sweet Jesus, yere she come! Eddeh, maybe yuh bettuh go out de back do' an' wait foh me at de Babaret-- 136th Street an' Lenix Avenue.

Eddy

(Quickly grabbing his hat)

Okay-- ah hopes yuh come out all right.

(Jericho quickly opens the door leading to the kitchen and goes in with him. As he does, Delilah enters. She looks around for a minute, goes to the door, calls out to Randall)

Delilah

(Looking around and then calling into hall)
Dere ain' nobodeh heah, Randall. Watch de hall till ah gits mah things.

(She turns back into the room, as she does, Jericho re-enters. They confront one another for a moment)

Jericho

(Weakly)

Hello, honey.

Delilah

Don' hello me yo' double crossin' bastard.

Jericho

Aw sugah--

Delilah

(Attempting to push past him)

Git de hell outta mah way.

Jericho

Now, babeh, ah couldn't help mahse'f.

Delilah

Is dat so? Well-- ah cain't help mahse'f walkin' outta dis dump, either.

Jericho

Aw sugah, yo' ain't mean dat.

Delilah

Wait an' see, (Delilah gets bag from room)

Jericho

(Pleadingly)

Wait a minute honey, lemme tell yuh how de thing happened.

Delilah

ah ain' wanta heah. Ah thoo lissenin' tuh yo' open dat big ape mouth of yes'.

Jericho

Wait a minute, Delilah. Doan' tawk dat erway.

(He produces money)

Looka all de dough ah won, bettin'!

Delilah

(Scornfully)

Yuh doan call dat dough? What 'bout all de money ah lost-- wen yuh double cross me.

Jericho

(Holding out money)

Well yere y'are sugah,-- ah'll make up de res' tuh yo'.

Delilah

Yuh ain't makin' up tuh me-- 'cause ah' thoo. Ah toleyuh

Delilah

(cont.)

ah was thoo ef yo' crossed me-- an' ah am.

Jericho

(Wildly)

Delilah honey-- doan leave me lak dis-- ah cain't fight wid-
out yuh-- ah kain' do nuthin' without yuh. Dean yuh love me
no mo' honey.

Delilah

(Viciously)

Love yuh!

(She laughs)

Yuh mus' be craze, Ah nevah did love yuh!

Jericho

But honey, all dese yeas--

Delilah

Yas, all dese yeas. An fur whut, fur whut! Fur yo' to th'w
all tuh hell 'cause yuh hell 'cause yuh so dammed ignunt.

Jericho

(Bewildered)

Whut yuh mean.

Delilah

Yuh don' think ah lived wid yuh 'cause ah loved yuh, did yuh?
It was for bucks, money-- all ah could git fum yuh. Aftuh to-
night, ah had de whole world by de tail, ef yuh would done ah
tole yuh.

Jericho

(Beginning to realize she means it)

Yuh mean tuh say dats all yuh wanted fum meh-- des money.

Delilah

Das all. Das all yuh had. But yuh ain't gonna have no mo'.
'Cause big boy, yours plenteh washed up in dis mans town.

Jericho

Whut de hell yuh mena-- washed up?

Delilah

Yuh doan think Randall Johnson, and all dem big time gambluhs
gonna let yuh git away wid dis, does yuh?

Jericho

(Moving closer to her)

Whut deh hell Randall Johnson got to do wid dis?

Delilah

Plenteh!

Jericho

Whut yo' mean, plenteh?

Delilah
Jes dat. Randall Johnson mah man.

Jericho
(Dumbfounded)
Yuh bin two timin' me!

Delilah
(Taunting him)
Ah ain' nevah one timed yuh. Wen yuh was in de trainin' camps ah was out-- spendin' yo' dough! Wen yuh come near me-- ah was thinin' er Randall. Wen yuh put yo' dirty hans' on me-- as close mah eyes an think er him.

Jericho
Yo' dirty strumpet! Mah paw was right!

Delilah
Yo' paw. Whut de hell he know. Ef yuh love him so bad-- why in hell yuh come up here. Whyn't yuh stay down south whar' yo' belongs.

Jericho
Two timin' me-- takin' mah dough an' givin' hit to dat dirty pimp.

Delilah
(Defiantly)
Yas-- an ah wouldda gived him mo-- all ah couldda git mah hans on.

Jericho
(Starting for her)
Yo' done give him de las 'cause ah'm gonna ckoocke some o' dat meanness outta yuh -- ah'm gonna--
(Randall has entered unobtrusively,
he has a gun in his hands)

Randall
(Quietly)
Hold on, big boy.
(Jericho whirls)
Git back, before this thing goes off.
(Jericho stands looking at him)

Jericho
Yo' dirty pimp. So das how hit is. Takin' mah money, an' mah wooman too!

Randall
(Easily)
Ah'm takin' yo' wooman. 'Cause yuh ain't gonna have no use for her no more.

Delilah
Tell him Randall.

Randall
Yuh doan think dem wite gambluhs gonna let yuh git away wid dis-- do yuh big boy?

Jericho

(Slowly)
White gambluhs.

Randall

(Quietly)
Yo' yeered me. All dem big shots went broke on yuh
and dey out to git yuh. Yuh crossed dem boy, an' a man
doan git tuh cross dem but once.

Jericho

Whut de hell yuh mean?

Randall

Ah give out de word when yo' said you'd lay down--- an' now---
its jus' too bad.

(To Delilah)

Come on, honey, les git goin'.

Delilah

(Starting to go, then stopping)
Wait a minute Randall. He got a mess er money dat he won,
bettin' on hisse'f. He ain't gonna need it-- whar' he goin'
evvything free dere.

Randall

Das right.

(To Jericho)

Keep dem hans' up.

(To Delilah)

Ah'll hol' de gun on him, honey, reach in his pockets and
git de dough.

(Jericho looks at them like a wounded lion.
Delilah walks over to him, and starts to
reach in his pockets. He suddenly grabs
her, pushes her in to Randall and makes a
leap for him. He grapples with him and
the men go down. Delilah looks on for a
moment like a caged pantheress. Suddenly
Jericho gets up, the gun is in his hands.
He fires once. Randall sinks to the floor.
Jericho looks at him dazedly)

Delilah

(Shrieking)

Randall! Randall! Oh my Gawd! Randall! Honey

(She rushes to him, he is lifeless.

There is a growing murmur of voices
in the hall. Jericho looks around
helplessly for a moment. Then,

throwing the pistol on the floor, quick-
ly runs out the back way.)

Police! Police! Police!

C U R T A I N

ACT THREE
SCENE TWO

The living room in the home of Pastor Tucker, in the south. Up back, right, is a door leading to a porch which faces the dusty road which winds past the house. Up back left, a window. Near the window is an old fashioned sideboard, containing a few cut glass trinkets. Down right is a door leading to the pastor's bedroom. Center stage there is a round table. On the table is an oil lamp and an old bible well worn. The walls are hung with colored lithographs of a religious nature. There is a calendar stuck up over the sideboard. Near the table is an old fashioned rocker. The time is dusk.

At Rise: Jericho is discovered alone, looking out of the window. After a moment, his father enters.

Pastor

(Hanging his hat on a peg in the wall)

Lawd! Dem pepul take all de strank uh man got, wran'l'n an' fightin' mongst demselves 'bout de new chu'ch.

Jericho

(Dully)

Yeah?

Pastor

(Chuckling)

Seem lak yuh brought trouble to dis town, son, wen you gived de money fo' dat chu'ch-- dey ain' no two o' dem elduhs kin git togethuh on de same quoishtun.

Jericho

Whut dey fightin' 'bout now?

Pastor

Oh dey 'eputin' 'bout which way duh altah got tuh be set-- an' dey ain' evun got duh foundatshuns down yit.

Jericho

Ah ain' gived dem pepul dat chu'ch. Ah gived it tuh you. Whyn't yuh do hit lak you want?

Pastor

(Gently reprovingly)

You ain't gived it tuh nobody but Gawd, son. Dats what ah got tuh keep remindin' dem Elduhs. Dey fuss and fits lak dey was gonna live in it dereselves.

Jericho

Yeah.

Pastor

(Looking at him a moment)

Is yuh had yo' suppuh?

Jericho

(Listless)

Some --

Pastor

Whuts de mattuh wid yuh, son? Evah sence yuh bin back, yuh ain't eter 'nough tuh keep uh crow uhlive?

Jericho

(Sullenly)

Ain' nuttin' duh mattuh.

Pastor

'Pyears tuh me lak dey is. All yuh do is set by duh windo' lookin' down deh road. Is dey somethin' on yo' min?--

Jericho

No.

Pastor

Kase effen dey is-- yuh kin unburthen yo' sef tuh me. Dats whut ah'm fo'-- tuh tell yuh troubles too.

Jericho

Ah knows dat-- but-- dey ain' nuthin' worryin' me.

Pastor

(Hesitantly)

Ah-- Ah-kinda' thet dey wuz-- an' you was hesitatin' cause yuh might be skeered. Ah ain' tole yuh, son, but ah learned uh lot, sence dat time yuh lite out fo' duh citeh.

Jericho

(Looking up)

Yeah?

Pastor

Yeah. Aftuh you wuz gone-- ah wuz mad fo' erwhile-- but ah comed to reelize dat uh men kin git tuh love Gawd tuh much. He kin git too proud 'count o' dat love-- an' he kin git too hahah-- an Gawd doan lak dat, cause effen a man git dat uhway, he git too thinkin' dat maybe he is Gawd, an staht to judgin' folks. An Gawd de onleh one kin do dat.

(Hesitates)

---Ah missed yuh, boy, wen you wuz uhway.

Jericho

Ah missed you too, Pappy. Sometime ah wish ah nevah did go.

Pastor

(Quietly)

Why?

Jericho

(Evasively)

Oh--Ah doan know-- ah jus' wish it.

Pastor

(More quietly)

Yous lonesome fo' dat 'ooman, ain' chu?

Jericho

(Quickly)

Ah---

Pastor

Ah knows. Dats whut yuh got on yo' min. Yuh set dere at duh winde' lak yuh hops yuh see uh comin' up duh road. Whyn't yuh sen' fo' uh?

Jericho

(Quickly)

Ah couldn't do dat.

Pastor

Why not? Is yuh skeered dat ah wouldn't git uhlong wid uh?

Jericho

No. But she wouldn' lak it down yeere.

Pastor

(Sighing)

Uh. Huh. Dats what ah was afraid of. Dat means dat one of dese days, yuh gonna be gittin' along back to 'er.

Jericho

(Passionately)

No. Ah ain' nevah gonna leave yeer no mo.

Pastor

Das whut yuh say now. But wen uh man love uh 'ooman he follah uh anywhere.

(There is a knock on the door)

Jericho

(Jumping quickly)

Who dere?

Voice

(Off)

Its me-- Veechy.

Pastor

(Calling)

Come in sistuh. Come in.

(The door opens. Veechy walks in. She is a buxom brown girl)

Veechy

(Entering)

Good even' Pastuh. Hello Jericho.

Pastor

Good evenin' sistuh.

Jericho

Hello, Veechy.

Veechy

Pastuh, Deacon Taylor ast me tuh stop by an' see kin yuh

Veechy (cont.)

come ovah fo' uh minute. Dey sputin 'bout whar to put de Baptisin' pool-- an he want yuh tuh settle de cawnfushun.

Pastor

(Rises and goes for his hat)

Lawd, dem pepul gittin' bad ez duh crowd at duh buildin' of duh Towah uh Babel. Fightin' and fussin' 'amongst demselves twill dey gonna end up wid no chu'ch.

(At the door)

Ah won' be gone long, Jericho

(To Veechy)

Why'nt yuh set yeere, an' keep Jericho comp'ny fo' uh wile, sistuh?

Veechy

Thank yuh, suh ah bleeve ah will res' mahsef uh little effen Jer'cho doan min.

Pastor

He don't min-- he'll lak it. Goodnight Sistuh.

Veechy

Goodnight, Pastuh.

(He exits)

(She sits down)

Shux. Dat man gonna kill 'isse'f worryin' 'bout uh lot uh pepul dat ain' got nuthin', but ah hanful uh 'thank yuh,' and uh mouf full uh much uhblige.

Jericho

Das whut ah keeps tellin' 'im. But he got dat chu'ch on 'is min.

Veechy

Sho has. Lawd, dat all he tawk about. Dat- an8 you.

Jericho

(Stirring)

He sho is happer ovah dat Temple.

Veechy

Yeah. An he happer 'cause you duh one gived it. It help shet dem back bituhs up.

Jericho

Whut back bituhs?

Veechy

(Settling herself)

Oh, Jer'cho, you know dem loud mouf falks at duh wakes an' celebrashuns.

Jericho

Who dey backbitin?

Veechy

You.

Jericho

(Amazed)

Me? Whut ah done 'em?

Veechy

You know how dem jealous hahted sinners carryin' on. Sittin' 'roun duh wakes, reessin 'tween times, tawkin 'bout how yuh lite out tuh duh citeh, an' nobody ain' seen hide not hahr of yuh fo' Gawd knows how long.

Jericho

Dat ain' none o' dere bizniz.

Veechy

(Chuckling)

Lawd. Whut diffunce dat make to 'um. De wimmens sittin' 'roun, clucking dey tongues 'ginst de roof de moufs, tazkin 'bout how yuh ain' sent yuh paw no money, ner nuthin, en de mens shakin' dey haids lak dey was pondrin' some anothuh deep quoishtun.

Jericho

Huh.

Veechy

Lawd. Dem pepul gonna carry dey cawnfushion wid 'em when dey die. But boy, dey sho' shet tight wen duh Pastuh make duh announcement 'bout duh chu'ch. Now, dey all hollerin' dat de knew hit all duh time. (Laugh)

Jericho

Grazez pepul.

Veechy

Das whut dey is.

(Changing her attitude)

Jericho, tell me 'bout de citeh.

Jericho

(Sullenly)

Ain' nuthin tuh tell.

Veechy

(Unconvinced)

Whut yuh tawkin' 'bout. Ain' nuthin' tuh tell, wid you runnin 'roun dat town wid a poket full o' dough, an' havin' uh fine time.

Jericho

Whut yuh wanna know?

Veechy

(Lowering her voice)

'Bout duh cabarets-- an' evvything.

Jericho

Oh duh citeh ain' so much. Ah laks it bettah back yeer.

Veechy

Das whut yuh say now. But ah bet one 'uh dese days, yuh gonna be shakin' duh dus' o' Fayette offa yo' shoes.

Jericho

Not me. Ah'm heah tuh stay.

Veechy

(Leaving)

Dat was my 'membunce. Effen dat hawg meat burn on me hits gonna be too bad. Goodnight, Jer'cho.

(Exiting)

Jericho

Goodnight, Veechy.

(Jericho sits quietly for a moment, then rises.

Goes slowly over to the table. His eye falls on the family bible. He opens it and begins to read. his back is to the door. After a moment the door slowly opens and Delilah walks in. Jericho hears her, jumps up and whirls to face her.)

Jericho

(Backing away from her)

Delilah! Delilah! Whut duh hell you doin' down yeah?

Delilah

(Advancing into the room)

I knowed I'd find yuh down here.

Jericho

(Putting the table between them)

Whut yuh want now wooman-- me an' you is thoo!

Delilah

Oh no we ain't-- we's jes begun.

Jericho

Whut yuh mean-- jes begun?

Delilah

Dis. Lissen, dey lookin fer you in Noo Yawk. Duh police is got uh party all planned fer yuh. Dey gittin ready a nice hot seat in yo' honuh--

Jericho

(Terror stricken)

--Delilah, fo Gawds sake lemme lone--

Delilah

-- An all dey needs-- is fer somebody tuh tell 'em where you is.

Jericho

(Imploringly)

Delilah-- honey-- you wouldn't do dat-- Fo' Gawds sake. Delilah lemme be-- lemme lone-- lemme stay down yeah-- ah woan worreh yuh no mo! Oh honeh-- you wouldn't tell 'em whar ah is--

Delilah

-- Dat depends.

Jericho

Depends on whut.

Delilah

You.

Jericho

Whut yuh mean-- me?

Delilah

Well -- if yuh do like ah tells yuh-- ah'll git yuh outta dis thing-- an ef yuh don't--

Jericho

(eagerly)

Oh honey, Gawd bless yuh-- ah knowed yuh wouldn't tell 'em-- ah'll do anything yuh say-- anything-- whut yuh want me tuh do, honey.

Delilah

Fight.

Jericho

Fight?

Delilah

Yeah, fight. But mah way. Anyway ah tells yuh.

Jericho

But ah cain't go back dere an fight-- dye'll git meh.

Delilah

Now looka here. Ah was de only one seen dat shootin-- an' ef ah tells dose police he tried tuh kill yuh-- dey'll let yuh go. Ah got it all fixed. But by God, duh firs ' move you make dat ah doan like-- ah'll switch-- an tell 'um yuh shot him in cold blood.

Jericho

(Suspiciously)

Why yuh wanna do all dis?

Delilah

You gonna git me back all dat dough ah lost-- an' plenteh mo besides.

(Pastor enters unseen by either of them
and stops to listen as she goes on)

Won't lay down. You'll lay down and like it. You gonna fight who ah tells yuh, wen ah tells yuh-- an' how ah tells yuh. yuh dammed murderer!

(She breaks into a fit of weeping)

Pastor

(Horror stricken)

Murderer? Murderer? So das why yuh bin settin at duh windo' all duh time. Yuh bin scairt!

Jericho

(Whirling)

Pappy. Ah tried tuh tell yuh. Ah ran back yeah tuh tell yuh buy ah couldn't-- ah couldn't.

Pastor

Dats case yuh had uh stain on yuh cawnsience dat wouldn't let yuh. res'. Killin' uh man, Murderer!

Jericho

Ah didn't aim tuh do hit. Dey druv me to hit. She was cheatin' on me an givin' mah moneh tuh Randall. Den he pull er gun on meh-- an' when ah went tuh take hit uhway fum him-- ah shot him.

Delilah

Yeah but duh cops don't know dat.

Pastor

But you do sistuh-- an you'll tell de truf won't yuh, an git mah po boy outta dis.

Delilah

Ef he do like I say-- come back an' fight.

Jericho

(Xing to her)

Yeah-- Yeah ah'll go wid yuh. Ah'll do anything yuh say-- only doan let dem policemen git me.

Delilah

(Gathering up her things)

Well les git goin'.

(They begin to exit. The Pastor runs before Jericho and stops him.)

Pastor

Wait uh minit son. Yuh can't do dat. You can't go back to uh life uh sinnin' and doin' evul. Yuh got tuh git right. Right wid mah Jesus and mah Lawd.

Delilah

He got tuh git right wid duh cops.

Jericho

She's right Pappy. Dey'll git meh. She'll tell 'em whar ah is. Dey'll hang meh ef ah doan go back.

Pastor

An whut about yo cawnscience an you soul? Who gonna set dat right. Not no policeman-- an not dis wooman. Duh onliest one kin do dat is Jesus! An you. Yuh got to fall down at the mercy seat and ask Jesus to fohgive yuh fo' takin duh life uh yo fellow man.

Delilah

He'll have plenteh uh time to do dat-- ef he doan come on.

Pastor

(Earnestly)

Oh son, doan 'chu see? Dat citeh ain no place fer uh man lak you. Hits uh bad place-- uh place uh evul. Yuh only gonna have mo' tribulashun effen you go. Go haid-- doan be uhfraid-- give yo'sef up tuh duh sherriff. Scawn dis wooman. De truf will prevail. Gawd'll see to dat. He that puts his trust in God can't be confounded. Den you kin come back. Dis years yo' place. Yuh belongs yeah. Cultivatin' Gawds acres. An

Pastor (cont.)

wens yous done yuh kin come home an' res yosef lak uh natchal man. Yuh kin set out dar on duh do' step an' watch Gawds great night fall down on duh yearth. An in you haht dere'll be peace-- Casen yuh know dat Jesus live dere wid His love and fohgiveness.

Jericho

Ah'm skeered tuh stay-- an' ah'm skeered tuh go.

Delilah

(Warningly)

Ef you don't cut out dis foolishness an git goin' its gonna be too late. Ah ain't hanging aroun' waitin for you an' dis old man to git some advice fum duh sky.

Pastor

Oh mah Lawd, make him see duh light. Git in 'is haht Gawd, an' lead 'im. Show mah boy duh way Lawd, He want tuh do right, but he blin' an' bewilduh. Help him Lawd. An fogive 'im Lawd. Make him see dat dis wooman only gonna lead him outta duh paf of righteousness into evah lasting damnation.

Jericho

Jesus, lissen tuh me, please suh, case ah needs yuh bad. Ah'm all tuckered out wid hidin' an scronchin' down evah time ah heahs somebodeh comin' up duh lane. Ah'm all wo' out wid seein' Randall's face evvey time ah closes mah eyes. Ah cain't do dat no mo Jesus. But ah'm scairt. Scairt tuh take mah chances ef ah doan do lak Delilah say. Jesus, mah paws right. Ah sees dat now. Ah got tuh do like he say-- an try an git right. An' Jesus ask Randall tuh fohgive me. You know ah ain' mean tuh shoot him. But ah wuz all to' up wid uh mean an' ugleh passhun, an' mah eyes wuz blin' wid anguh. Dis is you tes' Lawd-- ah kin see dat now. Dis duh cross yuh done give meh, an ah aims tuh bear hit Lawd, right up to yo throne an lay hit at yo feets.

Pastor

Oh mah Jesus, mah boy done seen duh light. He done come tuh yuh Lawd foh' true. Lawd, yo is our rock, in you Oh Lawd we take refuge. Even the we walk intuh duh shaaduh of duh valley of death we will feah no evul foh thou art wid us. Thy rod an' thy staff will comfort us.

(Pastor gives Delilah a long look. X's to Jericho)

C'mon son, les you an' me go down tuh Mr. Chahleh Johnson's house-- an let 'im call duh sheriff.

(Jericho rises and they start out slowly.

They exit and Delilah looks after them
incredulously. She starts to light a cigarete)

Delilah

(wonderingly)

Well, I'll be dammed.

CURTAIN

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