

police arrested me. Put me on the county farm. I had to bust a couple of niggers upside the head for trying to steal my food. A couple tried to escape. I caught them. That don't do nothing but make it harder on everybody. They out there enjoying their freedom ducking and dodging the law and everybody else on half rations and got to make up their work.

A fellow named John Hanson started a riot. I seen that wasn't gonna be nothing but bad news. I took him on one-to-one. Man-to-man. He busted my eye. That's why I can't see but so good out my one eye. He busted my eye but I put down the riot. They gave me a year. I did six months when the mayor called me in to see him. Say he wanted to put me in charge of the Third Ward. Told me say you fry the little fish and send the big fish to me. They give me a gun and a badge. I took my badge and gun and went down to the bank and laid it on the counter. Told them I wanted to borrow some money on that. There was a fellow name Harry Bryant had a place on Colwell Street he sold me. They ran him out of town. Charged me three times what it was worth. Took the money and ran. They tried to kill him for selling to a Negro. I say all right I got me a little start. Niggers got mad at me. Said I must have thought I was a white man 'cause I got hold to a little something. They been mad at me ever since. Everybody mad at me. You mad at me.

BLACK MARY: It ain't about being mad at you, Caesar. You're my brother. I respect and honor that. I always have and I always will. But we don't owe each other any more than that.

CAESAR: I ain't got but one sister and I try to do right by her and you push me away. Family is important. I know the value of family. Blood is thicker than water. It's been that way and always will be. You can't even water it down.

Your mother wanna turn blood into vinegar. When Uncle Jack was dying she wouldn't even go see him. Say he was fooling the people being a fake blind man. She was right. But that's her brother! He deserve better than that. You can't sit in judgment over people. That's God's job. God

decide who done right or wrong. Uncle Jack dying and calling for his sister and she wouldn't even go and see him. That's the kind of mother you got. You let her run your life. Got you thinking like her. You thinking wrong and don't even know it. Many a time I tried to make up to her but she wouldn't have it. Called me a scoundrel. But that didn't stop me from paying for her funeral. I paid for the funeral and even shed a few tears. If I had known any prayers I would have said them. Why? 'Cause she family. You give up on family and you ain't got nothing left.

*(Caesar exits. The lights go down on the scene.)*

## SCENE 4

*The lights come up on Black Mary and Aunt Ester in the kitchen. Black Mary is washing vegetables in the sink.*

AUNT ESTER: When you gonna comb out your hair? You got pretty hair. I don't know why you trying to hide it. Is you getting along with Mr. Citizen? He ain't no trouble is he?

BLACK MARY: He ain't no trouble. Eli trying to figure out how he got in the house.

AUNT ESTER: He knocked on the door and I let him in.

BLACK MARY: Eli say you ain't answered a door in twenty-five years. Say it look like somebody knocked some of the paint off coming through the hall window.

AUNT ESTER: If he knew what he ask for? I told you that's the problem now. People waste their time asking all the wrong questions. The question ain't how he got in. The question is who left the window open? That's the question. I told you don't waste the water. Put them in a pot and wash them off in the pot. *(Slaps Black Mary's hands)* Don't leave all them stems on there. You got that fire too high. Damp that fire down. Wake me up if Solly come back.