

RUBY. Hello, Spunk! Where you bound for?

SPUNK. Oh, just trucking on down the road. God knows.

RUBY (seizing his arm) You can't go way from here like that. Mama got shrimp with okra and tomatoes! Dry rice, too. You got to come eat some. Come on now, big doll-baby.

(He lets himself be carried inside and sits by the stove and rears back in a chair gloomily.)

RUBY (standing before him) Take all them knots out your face. You got friends a-plenty. Where one door is closed, there's a thousand open, (calls loudly) Mama! Come look who's here! (to SPUNK) You big, old good-looking thing, you! Play me something on that box whilst I put the supper on the table.

SPUNK. I don't feel to play, (begins to tune) But I reckon I will a little. Songs make themselves up in you and then you have to sing 'em. They got to come outside. (strums) Never can tell what's going to come out. (strums) Sometimes they got light with a brightness, but sometimes they sad. You could wring tears out of 'em. (laughs bitterly)

RUBY. Sing, Spunk, but don't sing nothing sad. I hates blues!

SPUNK. How can I tell what I'm going to sing? We got the power to open our mouth, but God gives us our words.

RUBY. Play something you already know. Like that pretty song you played sitting in the boat at the toe-party that night.

SPUNK (shakes his head sadly) Wisht I could, Ruby. But I ain't the same man. To myself I looked like the king of the world that night. Now I'm round here looking like the figure of fun. I was in my element that night. A fish loves to swim in water, but he's dead when he's swimming in grease.

(Begins to improvise. Strikes a definite tune. LINA listens hard.)

GETHSEMANE

RUBY. Play it, papa, play it! You got the business and you know it!

(She cuts a caper or two. He begins to sing. RUBY senses the song is not for her and gets quiet.)

~~Cut: [LINA closes the window. Opens it again. Goes to the door and comes out doors and creeps to RUBY'S window.]~~

RUBY is sitting on the arm of the chair and puts her arm about SPUNK's shoulder. He sings. Finally she pats his cheek.)

LINA. Spunk!

~~Cut: [(She runs home and takes her same seat at the window.)]~~

(SPUNK jumps when he heard his name and looks all about him.)

SPUNK. Look like I heard Evelina call my name.

RUBY. What would she be calling you for? She done stood up in church and told everybody she was through with you. Say she aims to live free from all sin till she die.

SPUNK (crossing to door) So she figger it's a sin to be with me, huh? I didn't know that. (a short pause) Still, she called me.

RUBY (clings to his hand) Nobody ain't called you, Spunk. Maybe it's a ghost. You better not answer. If you do you'll die soon.

SPUNK (dragging RUBY as he goes) Lina called me. And if she didn't her spirit did. I got to go see. Loose me.

RUBY (still clinging) Aw, Spunk, stay here and get treated right. Somebody done told her you got a wife and child somewhere 'round Bartow and she b'lieves it. She don't want you no more. With anybody else I'd say the same thing myself, but with you I don't care. Don't go, Spunk. Hear?

SPUNK (standing in the door. Pushes RUBY off) I couldn't have been mistook. She called me.
(He leaps the fence and rushes to the window.)