

BEGIN

~~goes up for grabs~~. People moving this way and thataway. Arms, legs, and sweat flying all over the dance floor. But Jimmy is not perturbed, he ain't broke a sweat. Ever the razor-sharp crease in his tuxedo pants is undisturbed. He's out front of that band and he's leading, and he's listening, and he's watching them ofays on the dance floor, and he's killing them with a cool, calculated, syncopated precision that would make a diamond cutter pack up his tools and walk away in shame.

YOLANDE: Good for him.

LENORA: That's what I thought. But later, after the last set, after all the white folks had gone, Jimmy's looking around the room like he's searching, like he's looking for somebody. Then I realize who he's looking for. He's looking for you. But you ain't there. That's when I realized that he's still waiting for you, Yolande.

YOLANDE: Waiting for me for what?

LENORA: To make an appearance. To hear him play.

YOLANDE: I've already heard him play, more times than I care to remember.

LENORA: Then, maybe he's waiting for you to tell him what happened.

YOLANDE: I got married. That's what happened. I thought he was aware of that fact.

LENORA: Why you being so hard on Jimmy?

YOLANDE: Why you got to keep bothering me about this man? Don't nobody care about him.

LENORA: You cared about him. Or at least you did at one point in time.

YOLANDE: That point in time has passed, Lenora. You are revisiting ancient history.

LENORA: Least you could do is sit down and talk to him.

YOLANDE: I am married, Lenora.

LENORA: Help ease his pain a bit. That ain't gonna kill you.

YOLANDE: Why is this so hard for you to understand? I cannot be hanging out with Jimmy Lunceford anymore.

LENORA: All right, I got it.

YOLANDE: You wanna help ease his pain? You talk to him. You help him understand.

LENORA: What's the matter with you?

YOLANDE: I thought it was gonna be different.

LENORA: You thought what was gonna be different?

YOLANDE: Everything. Being married. Being a wife. But, it's not different.

At least I don't feel any different.

LENORA: Is that all?

YOLANDE: I don't feel any different than I felt before.

LENORA: You are so typical.

YOLANDE: Typical?

LENORA: You think you the only woman that's going through what you goin through right now? Well, you're not. Women been going through what you going through since the beginning of time. In fact, what you got is a well-known, documented medical condition. They even got a scientific name for it.

YOLANDE: What?

LENORA: They call it the "I just got married and it ain't what I thought it was gonna be" blues.

YOLANDE: That's not no medical condition.

LENORA: I swear. Saw it in a medical book.

YOLANDE: Don't nobody believe you.

LENORA: Medical book said that women, they expect to wake up the morning after they get married and hear harp music and see butterflies flying around the room and shit like that.

YOLANDE: I never heard of none of this you talking about.

LENORA: I know you, and I know you expected to wake up and see blue skies, butterflies, and hear string music.

YOLANDE: Ain't nobody said nothing about hearing no string music.

LENORA: But, you did expect to see blue skies and butterflies, didn't ya?

YOLANDE: I expected to feel like a wife.

LENORA: But, how do you feel?

YOLANDE: I feel exactly the way I felt before I got married.

LENORA: "I just got married and it ain't what I thought it was gonna be" blues.

YOLANDE: I feel like I made a mistake.

LENORA: What happened? Did that nigger beat you?

YOLANDE: Oh, heavens no.

LENORA: Did he hit you?

YOLANDE: No.

LENORA: Did he threaten to hit you?

YOLANDE: No, Lenora.

LENORA: Did he embarrass you?

YOLANDE: No.

LENORA: I see. Did he try to get you to commit some sort of unnatural sex act on him?

YOLANDE: What?

LENORA: Uh, huh. I knew it.  
YOLANDE: What're you talking about?  
LENORA: You shouldn't be such a prude, girl. I know what men like, and I know that men like it when women do things like that. They like the attention. In fact, I don't see anything unnatural about it. Especially when the man responds in kind.  
YOLANDE: What do you mean, respond in kind?  
LENORA: When they do it back to you, honey. I like the feel of a man's lips down there. His tongue. I like the warmth of his breath.  
YOLANDE: What on earth are you talking about?  
LENORA: I'm talking about using your mouth, girl. And I'm not talking about talking.  
YOLANDE: Oh, no.  
LENORA: You ought to try it. You might like it. And who knows? He responds in kind, and maybe you could find them blue skies and butterflies you been looking for.  
YOLANDE: That was not the problem, Lenora.  
LENORA: Then what was the problem? How did it go on your wedding night?  
YOLANDE: What do you mean, how did it go?  
LENORA: You know what I mean. Was he happy? Did you satisfy him?  
YOLANDE: That's none of your business.  
LENORA: It's never been anything other than none of my business. Now tell me, How many times did you do it?  
YOLANDE: I don't know.  
LENORA: You lost count?  
YOLANDE: It was a very long night.  
LENORA: What about the very first time that you did it? Did it take him a real long time to get done or did he get done real quick and keep coming back for more?  
YOLANDE: Why are you asking me so many questions?  
LENORA: Why you being so defensive?  
YOLANDE: My life is not on public display.  
LENORA: Since when did I become the public?  
YOLANDE: You are asking very personal questions.  
LENORA: This is a very personal matter, Yolande. Somebody told me that he was going to Paris without you. Is that true?  
YOLANDE: We decided to meet there around Christmas.  
LENORA: Then who is he going to Paris with?  
YOLANDE: He's not going with anybody.

LENORA: Then he's going alone.  
YOLANDE: Not exactly.  
LENORA: Either he's going alone or he's going with somebody, Yolande. It's got to be one or the other. Who is he going with?  
YOLANDE: Harold Jackman.  
LENORA: The best man from your wedding?  
YOLANDE: I don't understand what any of this has got to do with the price of butter.  
LENORA: All right, then forget it.  
YOLANDE: What you mean by that?  
LENORA: By what?  
YOLANDE: "All right, then forget it."  
LENORA: It means "All right, then forget it."  
YOLANDE: You not fooling nobody. I know what you thinking.  
LENORA: Is that right?  
YOLANDE: That's right.  
LENORA: You now a mind reader on top of everything else?  
YOLANDE: That little mind of yours is not that difficult to read.  
LENORA: What you might be reading are your own thoughts, Yolande. You ever think of that? Some people see only what they wanna see, no matter what's standing right in front of them. Now I'm gonna ask you something. You can answer if you feel like it, but you know what? It really don't matter to me. But, I'm only gonna ask you once. That night, after your wedding, did Countee make you his wife?  
YOLANDE: He had some problems.  
LENORA: What kind of problems?  
YOLANDE: Man problems.  
LENORA: What about the night after that?  
YOLANDE: He needed time to rest.  
LENORA: Rest? According to you, he wasn't doing nothing.  
YOLANDE: He's been doing a lot of work.  
LENORA: What kind of work?  
YOLANDE: He's a poet, Lenora.  
LENORA: I understand that. But you still ain't told me what kind of work he's doing that requires him to need time to rest.  
YOLANDE: If we do it too much, it'll fatigue his brain and interfere with his work, and the work he's doing is very important.  
LENORA: Has this man even laid a hand on you yet?  
YOLANDE: He's been under a lot of pressure.

LENORA: Ain't that much pressure in the world.  
YOLANDE: What do you know about it?  
LENORA: The man hasn't touched you yet. That's the reason you don't feel any different. And now, he's ready to sail to Paris with the best man from your wedding.  
YOLANDE: You think that maybe . . .  
LENORA: You're not dumb, Yolande. If you're happy with this, it's not my place to tell you anything different. You the only person who can say what you see when you look at that man and can't nobody get inside of you and look out through your eyes. Just make sure that what you're looking at is something that's outside of you, Yolande. Just make sure that what you're looking at is not a reflection of the world that you've created inside of your own head.

END

#### SCENE FOUR

*Yolande and Countee. Countee is packing.*

COUNTEE: Every time I think I'm done packing, I find something else I think I ought to bring. So, I open the trunk thinking I'm gonna add just one item. Next thing I know, the trunk is empty and everything that took me ten days to put into the trunk is spread out all over the room, and I'm right back where I was when I started packing ten days ago. Think I ought to bring this seersucker?  
YOLANDE: I think it's gonna be a lil too cool for seersucker.  
COUNTEE: You're right.  
YOLANDE: 'Course I am.  
COUNTEE: Don't know what I'd do without you.  
YOLANDE: Funny. I was just asking myself the same question.  
COUNTEE: Everything all right?  
YOLANDE: I wanna go with you.  
COUNTEE: I know you do. And I want you to go with me.  
YOLANDE: That's not what I mean.  
COUNTEE: But, we're gonna have to wait till December.  
YOLANDE: I've changed my mind, Countee. I want to go with you now.  
COUNTEE: That's not possible right now.  
YOLANDE: Why isn't it possible?  
COUNTEE: We don't have the money.

~~YOLANDE: We have enough.  
COUNTEE: Not for you to travel first class.  
YOLANDE: I don't care about traveling first class anymore. I'll travel second class or tourist if I have to.  
COUNTEE: You're willing to travel tourist class to Paris?  
YOLANDE: I'll ride in steerage if that's what it takes. But when you sail, I wanna sail with you, Countee. I don't wanna stay here alone.  
COUNTEE: What about your job?  
YOLANDE: My job can wait.  
COUNTEE: You told them you were going to start in September.  
YOLANDE: I know what I told them, and I'll tell them something different. If they don't like it, they can hire somebody else, but I don't wanna stay here alone.  
COUNTEE: Yolande, even if we agreed that we should travel together, and even if we both agreed to travel tourist class, and if we kept track of every single nickel that passed through our hands, we still would not have enough money.  
YOLANDE: But, there's enough for you to travel with Harold Jackman?  
COUNTEE: Harold Jackman is making a considerable contribution toward the expenses.  
YOLANDE: I will make a considerable contribution toward expenses.  
COUNTEE: You don't have the money.  
YOLANDE: I will get the money.  
COUNTEE: From where?  
YOLANDE: All you have to do is tell me how much we need.  
COUNTEE: Your father?  
YOLANDE: Don't worry about where the money comes from.  
COUNTEE: Your father's already paid for our wedding and for our honeymoon.  
YOLANDE: That's not your concern, Countee.  
COUNTEE: I can't accept any more money from your father.  
YOLANDE: That money is my money. The money is in my name, money my father set aside for me. All you have to do is tell me how much we're gonna need. I will get it.  
COUNTEE: And what about Harold? What am I supposed to tell him?  
YOLANDE: You tell him that there's been a change of plans. That you've decided to travel to Paris with your wife. That's what you tell him.  
COUNTEE: What's the matter with you?  
YOLANDE: I wanna be on that boat with you when you leave for Paris.  
COUNTEE: Yolande, I need to spend some time with Harold.~~