

BOWZIE stands center. TONY enters.

TONY

You got a lot of nerve, partner. Your scrawny ass better get back in there and eat that cake or we gon' have to dance.

BOWZIE

College.

TONY

Niggah, I don't make a habit of repeating myself.

BOWZIE

Why can't *this* be college?

TONY

Brother, I'ma show you these hands-

BOWZIE

(*Sincerely.*) Don't let me be one of them uppity fools we make fun of.

TONY

Aw, you know you too smart to let that happen. That's why they let you in.

BOWZIE

Hell, I know I'm smart. That's why I always act a fool. To hide it.

TONY

You a country Negro to your bones.

BOWZIE

I sure hope so. I keep picturing them rich college kids and they fancy schools and they fancy clothes.

TONY

Well you ain't go to no fancy grade school, but Sally made the hell out of those threads.

BOWZIE

Sure did.

Beat.

Hey, you ever heard of the Nashville Student Group.

TONY

I ain't been a student since I was ten. And wasn't a good one then. Them kind of groups don't even know my name.

BOWZIE

Man in a suit dropped by yesterday inviting me to a meeting, and, boy, it's a trip and a half. He say "Is this the residence of Mr. Bow-Sigh Brandon?" Just like that. Proper and all. I thought it was a collector. I almost slammed the door in face except he was a Negro and wearing a suit.

TONY

Bow-Sigh?

BOWZIE

Just like that. "Mr. Bow-Sigh Brandon's residence."

TONY

Get out.

BOWZIE

I say, "Why yes indeed. I am *Prince Bow-Sigh Brandon*."

TONY

Hush your mouth.

BOWZIE

And he believed me!

TONY

That's gon' be you. *Prince Bow-Sigh Brandon!*

BOWZIE

Named James Lawson. One of them niggahs been riling up the oafys [*An offensive term for a White person*] at Woolworth's.

TONY

Them motherfuckers got too much time on their hands.

BOWZIE

You ain't never lied. And Evelyn still mad we had to boycott for Easter and she couldn't get a Easter dress.

TONY

Sally, too.

BOWZIE

I told him, I'm married and trying to study my way to a good job so I can feed my family. I ain't got time to be sitting at no diner counters. And ain't even eating!

TONY

Just sitting there looking crazy.

BOWZIE

He say they ain't just sitting no more; they riding.

Riding? TONY

Buses. BOWZIE

What that got to do with anything? TONY

Say they riding down through Alabama. BOWZIE

For the hell of it? TONY

For the hell of it. BOWZIE

Boy! TONY

I say the only place my Black ass riding is the city bus to school and back. I ain't got time for that foolishness. BOWZIE

Educated Negroes will find anything to be riled up about. For sure. TONY

For sure. BOWZIE

They breathe. I'm awfully sorry about the cake. I just get so full. I don't know what I'm doing with myself.

Go'n apologize, we alright. Ain't nobody hurt. TONY

(*An attempt at levity.*) Don't let me be one of them uppity fools we make fun of. BOWZIE

(*With levity.*) You already an uppity fool and we already make fun of you. TONY

Man you ain't nothing. BOWZIE

Sure ain't. TONY