

SHIFT

RACHEL. Good thing I studied that map like the back of my hand. Dorothy say's she'll have a few cars to us in no time. But to stay put in case she needs to call back.

SARAH. ...

RACHEL. Says it's happened before.

All the miles we puttin' in.

Cars, right?

So unpredictable.

SARAH. Whatever you say.

(Silence.)

(Silence.)

RACHEL. How's your sister?

(Silence.)

(Silence.)

SARAH. ...Growing like a stalk that girl.

Never wants to play outside anymore.

Too much heat, too many mosquitos, everything's boring.

That age.

RACHEL. Hmm.

She's working through some things.

SARAH. Sixteen, taller than me and wearing lipstick. Red lipstick, Rachel.

RACHEL. Good, she likes it.

Sales-girl said it was all the rage.

SARAH. Should've known it was you.

Does she tell you things?
She won't talk to me anymore.

RACHEL. She's an eye-talian lookin' girl in a White family.
What do you expect?

SARAH. I say, Penny, that bra – oh,
yeah! *Penny*.
She doesn't want to be called that anymore.
Penelope.
Penelope, that brassiere is a tad bit small on you. We'll
get you fitted again.
She tells me, I'm wrong.
We – her passive-aggressive word for Black – wear
them *differently*.

RACHEL. Don't take things so personally.

SARAH. That's rich coming from you.

RACHEL. Careful.

SARAH. I'm tired.

Of being careful.

Always.

What will Rachel think if I do this?

Say that?

RACHEL. There are more pressing details to attend to.

An entire country out there needing to be
convinced to trust me, love me, embrace me –

SARAH. Embrace yourself!

How about you start there!

RACHEL. I am not that!

I am not that

Or you! We.

Are different.

SARAH. That what you've been telling Penny?

RACHEL. *Penelope.*

SARAH. Don't you dare chastise me in this very moment.
I asked you a question.

RACHEL. I'd like to know who you imagine you're speaking to.

SARAH. My cousin, that's who.

RACHEL. I know what we are to each other.

Still doesn't make us more.

Will never make us the same either.

And as for Penelope... She's dodging mosquito bites and the sun, not because she's sixteen, but to maintain the porcelain dream she was born into!

SARAH. What is that supposed to mean?

RACHEL. Figure it out.

SARAH. Rachel Helen, you've hurt my feelings.

RACHEL. You're responsible for them, not me.

SARAH. And *you* can't inherit your father's feelings either.

Your father was the one given to the maid to be raised.

Not you.

He was torn away from his sister.

He was the one who grew up calling his parents *Mrs.* and *Mr.*

Not you.

And yet, the rest of the family has at least attempted to reconcile – but not the inculpable Rachel.

You are determined to make us all suffer for something we can't change.

Our grandmother was young, ambitious and saw an opportunity

to have a better life so she took it.

You want to crucify her when you have no idea what she endured.

You have no idea the pain and guilt she carries everyday. Because you won't even speak to her.

RACHEL. (*With disgust.*) Shameful.

Spending her adult life passing for White.

Something she is not.

Yet, my daddy born to a White man – but a bit too dark – gets sent away to live with the Black nanny who got paid to change *your* mother's diapers.

SARAH. I never once said it was right.

RACHEL. Say she was horrific.

SARAH. IT was a horrific time.

RACHEL. That's why we're different.

You can't bring yourself to admit who the real victims are.

SARAH. We can agree the conditions you must endure today are far from perfect.

For her, a high yellow woman sixty years ago?

It took courage.

RACHEL. You echo her perfectly.

Always with the deflection.

Forcing your reaction on another's pain.

Pain you could never begin to comprehend.

SARAH. You're more like her than you care to admit.

RACHEL. Pile on the insults, why don't you.

SARAH. She provided Black women with hope and a blueprint.

RACHEL. All the while impersonating a White woman.

How can I respect that?

SARAH. HOW ELSE COULD SHE INITIATE CHANGE?

HOW ELSE COULD SHE HAVE GIVEN HER
FAMILY A NEW BEGINNING?

RACHEL. Same way I'm doing!

Being Negro everyday.

Especially when it hurts!

SARAH. You're both fighting for the same principle.

She, from across the ropes.

What better equipped sister-in-arms than one familiar
with the cause.

RACHEL. Oh, don't serve me chitlins and call it caviar.

SARAH. Then swallow this.

It's not that she disassociated herself from her race that
upsets you -

RACHEL. Sarah -

SARAH. It's that you didn't -

RACHEL. Stop.

SARAH. Reap any of the benefits!

That's your number and I called it!

RACHEL. ...

SARAH.

RACHEL. ...

SARAH. ...

RACHEL. You got to rescue us back there.

Won't for your White

Me, Dee and Abby be breathless right now.

The whole time that man looking past us and at you,

I realized no matter what I said

None of my pretty words would save us.

Dee and Abby knew it too.

That's why we stood there silent.

But I could feel my body reaching for just an ounce of
what you got.

The look of a savior.

(Fed up, SARAH pulls a coin from her purse.)

Go head.

Call your grandmother if you see fit.

And whatever help she sends,
you take it.

(SARAH begins to dial the operator.)

I'll have no part in her brand of salvation.

Be assured of this.

I don't care how it kills me

I'mma keep going and going and going and going until
something changes.

Because I want to save my people.

I want my people to believe that we can save ourselves
being ourselves.

(SARAH hangs up the phone.)

Your side of the family got the new beginning.

We got thick skin and thin opportunities.

Lackluster futures and dreary pasts.

My father got placed on the *front* of the ship, on the
back of the bus, on the *front* line of duty
and the receiving end of discrimination.

Placed there by his own mother.

We got durable bones tested and proven.

We got hell on earth.

Perhaps it be appropriate that I harbor just a tad bit of
bitterness.

(RACHEL is preoccupied by her last words.)