

## SHIFT

*(DEE throws her head over her neck in reaction to any sound / movement.)*

ABBY. Why can't we sit in the car?

DEE. Told you. Got to be alert. We might need to run. And fast.

ABBY. They want to find us, they will. I just hope you got plenty of bullets in that thing.

DEE. Leave me alone, girl.

ABBY. You still mad at me?

DEE. I said. Leave me alone.

ABBY. Fine.

*(Silence.)*

*(Silence.)*

*(Silence.)*

*(ABBY whistles.)*

*(DEE wants to slap her.)*

DEE. I told Otis I'd be right back.

Just going down to county jail for a visit.

*(Silence.)*

*(Silence.)*

ABBY. Why you go and lie to him like that?

DEE. 'Cause yo' stupidity done rubbed off on me that's why.

ABBY. Soon as we get out of here...if we -  
I'm moving up North.

DEE. Mmm. I'd like to say they'd be lucky to have you but that's a lie.

ABBY. 'Cause I'm getting married  
And it ain't to Kendrick neither.

*(Silence. ABBY regrets telling her truth.)*

Don't you want to know who?

DEE. I barely want to know you.

So, no.

ABBY. 'Cause I just ain't got no kind of good in me, right?

DEE. Not a lick.

ABBY. Debra's more like me than you.

That's how I know she'll survive in there.

However long they intend on keeping her locked up.

She'll survive.

DEE. She's nothing like you.

ABBY. You want her to be yo' mirror?

In the face of death worried about what her man gon'  
thank if she

ain't home to wash his butt?

DEE. That's supposed to hurt my precious feelings?

ABBY. Yes.

DEE. Wanted my daughter to walk through the front door,  
not the back.

Legally know that she belongs.

It was just a piece of paper, a list, a dream.

So when that petition rolled around,

I signed it

And jumped through all the hoops.

I put my daughter in that school, in that jail, in the face  
of death.

That was all me.  
And I don't even know if I harbor any regret.  
All I know is  
Debra thinks she did the right thing.  
Says she did what I would've done.  
How I speak about fearless living.  
How I stand for something.  
How because of me she couldn't let that boy harass  
those girls.

**ABBY.** You got in the car to put proof behind Debra's ideas  
of you?

**DEE.** (*With sincerity and vulnerability.*) Rachel talking  
about making sure we get printed up in the papers all  
over.

Front page.

I'd show Debra – if we ended up on a big one, the  
Times, Post, Globe, something credible –

That's your Mama, working for equality. Fighting for  
you.

If I don't do this, everything she believes about me, all  
the values I passed on to her, she'll see as a lie.

A lie she based the biggest decision of her young life on.

So you see, I didn't really have a choice but to get in  
that car when the only other options are sitting and  
waiting for someone else to change Debra's fate.

Getting in that Cadillac, coming on this trip is me  
trying to enlarge the little bit of hope she got stored up.  
In that moment, me seeing my daughter being carted  
away and wasn't nothing I could do to stop it, that's  
what I decided being a mother was.

She might die in there. I might die out here.

Least we can both say our lives were about trying to  
fulfill a purpose.

**ABBY.** Life is worth living if you know what you want to  
do with it.

That's the only way. Got to know what you want.  
Make yourself big enough to the point where  
your purpose sees you as clearly as you see it.  
That's the key.

I ain't gonna be a business woman.  
It don't see me the way I see it.  
My face too blurry.  
My skin too dark.  
My voice too high.

**DEE.** You don't know that.

**ABBY.** I know we gon' die fighting.

*(Silence.)*

See you ain't even gon' try to set me straight on that.

*(Silence.)*

And you right, sometimes I just want to speed up the  
process, speed up the pain, speed up the agony of being  
blurry.

Being out of focus to the rest of the world.

**DEE.** You the most nerve-stomping little stick I've ever  
met.

But you ain't no kind of blurry to me.

I see you.

And you always yapping.

Hard not to hear you.

**ABBY.** Just wish I could sense our future. Could feel the  
air change.

'Cause then I'd know  
it'll all be worth it.

*(Silence.)*

*(Silence.)*

*(Silence.)*

*(DEE turns her face so ABBY can't see the tears falling from her eyes.)*

Thank you for saving me.

DEE. Shut up lil girl.

ABBY. And my baby.

DEE. What you say?