

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner - Mary Side

MARY. (*Hums along with TILLIE then:*) I must have been a child the last time I heard my mother sing that song. Miss Binks . . . Is your family from the South?

TILLIE. My mother grew up in Meridian, Mississippi.

MARY. My family's from right near there, in Livingston, Alabama.

TILLIE. Song's been passed around.

MARY. Reminds me of doing chores. Seemed nobody had to work as hard as we did. When my mother sang that from the porch you ran home and get straight to work on your chores or she'd come looking for us with her switch. I hated that damn song.

(*CHRISTINA enters from the parlor.*)

CHRISTINA. Mrs. Prentice . . . I do wish we had met under different circumstances.

MARY. How? How else do you think we would've ever met?

CHRISTINA. Yes . . . But I mean—

MARY. Mrs. Drayton, you don't know our lives. I can count on one hand how many times I've said anything to white folks other than, "Here's your change. Thank you. Have a good day." We stay away from you as much as you stay away from us.

CHRISTINA. Then I take it then you don't approve either.

MARY. I've come to understand there's no way to control how we get introduced to things in life. How we're introduced to one another, introduced to love or to hate and yet we all have a funny idea no matter how smart we are—like my son—that we can plan for everything. You know that saying, you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. This certainly was not the plan. Especially after all my son's been through.

CHRISTINA. Yes . . . Joey's told me. I know how horrible—

MARY. Oh Mrs. Drayton please— You can try to sympathize. Don't try to relate.

You don't know what it's like— His wife was a daughter to us and that little boy never got to try being a man.

CHRISTINA. We lost our son fifteen years ago. Fifteen years, seven months . . . Six days.

MARY. I'm sorry, most people don't know, Mrs. Drayton . . .