

**VETA, JUDGE and MYRTLE MAE**

*(VETA is standing in doorway, looking like something the cat dragged in. Shakes her head sadly; looks into the room and sighs; her hat is crooked.)*

**MYRTLE.** *(MYRTLE jumps up.)* Mother! Look, Judge—

**JUDGE.** *(Rising.)* Veta Louise—what’s wrong, girl?

**VETA.** *(Shaking her head.)* I never thought I’d see either of you again. *(MYRTLE and JUDGE take VETA to chair L. of table R.)*

**MYRTLE.** Take hold of her, Judge. She looks like she’s going to faint. *(JUDGE gets hold of her on one side and MYRTLE on the other. They start to bring her into the room.)* Now, Mother—you’re all right. You’re going to be perfectly all right.

**JUDGE.** Steady—steady, girl, steady.

**VETA.** Please—not so fast.

**JUDGE.** Don’t rush her, Myrtle—Ease her in.

**VETA.** Let me sit down. Only get me some place where I can sit down.

**JUDGE.** *(Guiding her to a big chair.)* Here you are, girl. Easy, Myrtle—easy. *(VETA is about to lower herself into the chair. She sighs. But before she can complete the lowering, MYRTLE MAE lets out a yelp and VETA straightens up quickly.)*

**MYRTLE.** Oh— *(She picks up envelope off chair. Holds it up.)* The gas bill.

**VETA.** *(Hand at head.)* Oh—oh, my—*(Sits.)*

**JUDGE.** Get her some tea, Myrtle. Do you want some tea, Veta?

**MYRTLE.** I’ll get you some tea, Mother. Get her coat off, Judge.

**JUDGE.** Let Myrtle get your coat off, Veta. Get her coat off, Myrtle.

**VETA.** Leave me alone. Let me sit here. Let me get my breath.

**MYRTLE.** Let her get her breath, Judge.

**VETA.** Let me sit here a minute and then let me get upstairs to my own bed where I can let go.

**MYRTLE.** What happened to you, Mother?

**VETA.** Omar, I want you to sue them. They put me in and let Elwood out.

**JUDGE.** What’s this?

**MYRTLE.** But why? What did you say? What did you do? You must have done something.

**VETA.** I didn’t do one thing. I simply told them about Elwood and Harvey.

**JUDGE.** Then how did it happen to you? I don’t understand it. *(Sits chair R.)*

**VETA.** I told them about Elwood, and then I went down to the cab to get his things. As I was walking along the path--this awful man stepped out.

**MYRTLE.** A man—what did he do, Mother?

**VETA.** What did he do? He took hold of me and took me in there and then he—*(Bows her head. MYRTLE and JUDGE exchange a look.)*

**JUDGE.** *(Softly.)* Go on, Veta Louise. Go on, girl.

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**MYRTLE.** (*Goes over, takes her hand.*) Poor Mother—Was he a young man?

**JUDGE.** Myrtle Mae—perhaps you'd better leave the room.

**MYRTLE.** Now? I should say not! Go on, Mother.

**JUDGE.** (*Edging closer.*) What did he do, Veta?

**VETA.** He took me upstairs and tore my clothes off.

**MYRTLE.** (*Shrieking.*) Oh—did you hear that, Judge! Go on, Mother. (*She is all ears.*)

**JUDGE.** By God—I'll sue them for this!

**VETA.** And then he sat me down in a tub of water.

**MYRTLE.** (*Disappointed.*) Oh! For heaven's sake! (*Rises.*)

**VETA.** I always thought that what you were showed on your face. Don't you believe it, Judge! Don't you believe it, Myrtle. This man took hold of me like I was a woman on the streets—but I fought. I always said if a man jumped at me—I'd fight. Haven't I always said that, Myrtle?

**MYRTLE.** She's always said that, Judge. That's what Mother always told me to do.

**VETA.** And then he hustled me into that sanitarium and set me down in that tub of water and began treating me like I was a—

**MYRTLE.** A what—?

**VETA.** A crazy woman—but he did that just for spite.

**JUDGE.** Well, I'll be damned!

**VETA.** And those doctors came upstairs and asked a lot of questions—all about sex-urges—and all that filthy stuff. That place ought to be cleaned up, Omar. You better get the

authorities to clean it up. Myrtle, don't you ever go out there. You hear me?

**JUDGE.** This stinks to high heaven, Veta. By God, it stinks!

**VETA.** You've got to do something about it, Judge. You've got to sue them.

**JUDGE.** I will, girl. By God, I will! If Chumley thinks he can run an unsavory place like this on the outskirts of town he'll be publicly chastised. By God, I'll run him out of the state.

**VETA.** Tell me, Judge. Is that all those doctors do at places like that—think about sex?

**JUDGE.** I don't know.

**VETA.** Because if it is they ought to be ashamed—of themselves. It's all in their head anyway. Why don't they get out and go long walks in the fresh air? (*To MYRTLE*) Judge Gaffney walked everywhere for years—didn't you, Judge?