

“Miss Hannah Comes Back”

Side #2 – Delilah and Cathy

DELILAH. ... and of course it just broke his heart when she left, and she never did come back, not ever. Well, neither did he, of course. And her granny's land, well, her cousin still has it – first cousin once removed, her granny and his mother were sisters – and there're still folks around here hold grudges about that, thinking Paula got done wrong by her cousin, though if you ask me, he had a good case, her cousin I mean. But it still is a shame.

Anyhow, he still carries a torch for her, but I bet you can tell that...

CATHY. Who?

DELILAH. Paula. He must've carried a torch for her all these years.

CATHY. (*Blandly.*) Her cousin?

DELILAH. No, good Lord, no. We don't marry our cousins around here.

CATHY. That's a relief.

DELILAH. Although, come to think of it, Shannon Maxwell married her cousin, although he still stays over to his mama's house, and they aren't going to have children, so that's all right.

CATHY. How many kudzu leaves did you guess were on her house?

DELILAH. Oh, good Lord, I didn't put in a guess. What a silly thing. My mama put in a guess, but I told her not to, but she did it anyway. So, you enjoying teaching?

CATHY. Oh, sure.

DELILAH. That's good. Now, where you get your Ph.D. from?

CATHY. Northwestern University.

DELILAH. That's right, Northwestern University. How'd you like it up there? It gets right cold in the winter, doesn't it.

CATHY. Yes, it does.

DELILAH. Right cold, indeed. The stories Paula has told me! I don't know how you can stand it. But, of course, it gets right cold in Montana in the winter time, too, doesn't it?

CATHY. Right cold.

DELILAH. But it isn't hot there, right? In the summertime.

CATHY. No, not very.

DELILAH. My, my. I'll bet, I lived there, I'd never get warm enough. Never get warm enough.

CATHY. No, you probably wouldn't.

DELILAH. Never get warm enough. Well, I guess a person to get used to just about anything. Even the heat. It gets hot here, I'll tell you what.

CATHY. So I hear.

DELILAH. Real hot. You're lucky the Trust let air-conditioning be put in this house. You would have been right miserable without it. Now, tell me, you see much theater up there in Chicago?

CATHY. Theater? Sure. Some.

DELILAH. I go to Chicago once a year to visit my cousin – actually my mama's cousin – she lives in Lincoln Park, and we see all of the good theater there. I'm partial to the Goodman, myself. They do the best work. The best work.

CATHY. Yes, we saw a few things there.

DELILAH. But I tell you what, y'all should go to the New Stage Theatre in Jackson. They do excellent work there.

CATHY. In Jackson?

DELILAH. Yes, right there in Jackson. Oh, I know, you must not have had anyone to tell you that people down here are educated and cultured, too. All of us can read, and a few of us can even write, too.

CATHY. Oh. Like Faulkner? And Eudora Welty?

DELILAH. Yes. Like them.

(Silence.)

CATHY. So you and Paula went to high school together?

DELILAH. Yes, that's right. I was two years ahead of her, though of course that was because I skipped a grade when I was a little girl. I skipped second grade, I was that smart.

CATHY. I'll bet you were.

DELILAH. Oh yes, I was that smart. Now, Paula, she's smart, but she didn't do but so-so in high school. B's and C's, mostly. I was surprised when she got into Agnes Scott. Real surprised. But she did really well in college. But I suppose you know that. Now, why didn't she go to law school?

CATHY. Law school?

DELILAH. Oh, you didn't know? She was planning to go to law school.

Everyone was real surprised when she decided to write mystery novels instead.

CATHY. She's a good writer.

DELILAH. Oh, of course, she's an excellent writer. I've read every single one of her books. Get them out of the library as soon as they come in. I know the head librarian, she was a sorority sister of mine, she sets a copy aside for me.

CATHY. How nice for you.

DELILAH. Yes, she's a good writer. A very good writer. My goodness, people from different parts of the world really do have different manners, wouldn't you say?

CATHY. Yes. Of course.

DELILAH. Everybody's got a different way of doing things. Well, *viva la difference*, as the French say. It's been really educational getting to know you, for example. Real educational. You're just one of the differentest people I've ever met.

CATHY. I'm glad to hear that.

DELILAH. I think people ought to move around more often, live where they ain't from, get to know different ways of doing things. Of course, it can be a hardship, but I think it would be very rewarding if people actually did it. You know, get used to new places. Don't you think so?

CATHY. Yes. Of course.

DELILAH. Yes, it's hard, but it sure is educational to get used to different things. Well, I mustn't overstay my welcome. Thank you so much for the iced tea. It was real good.

*(DELILAH stands, CATHY stands with her.)*

DELILAH. I'll see myself out. You have a good one, now.