

ABIGAIL: Make a fresh batch of lemon oil.

LILY: Yes, Miss Abigail.

CLARE: *(unsure of what she has just heard)* Why'd they kill Emmett Till?

LILY: He used to mow the lawn here. Second Saturday from April to November, he'd be here, wait two hours for someone to wake up, just to get that little bit of extra for his Mama.

ABIGAIL: I have a luncheon to serve at two p.m.!

LILY: Never forget the time he asked for a drink 'a water. Sweat jus' drippin' down him, musta been July. She jus' looked at him.

ABIGAIL: *(to the imaginary boy)* When ya finish your work, boy. I didn't need no lazy colored boy comin' round here. I wasn't payin' him to drink water.

CLARE: *(almost in tears, wanting an answer)* But why would anybody want to kill Emmett Till?

ABIGAIL: I'm expectin' twenty-five ladies in less than two hours, and there's a lot more important things to attend to than what's happened to some colored.

LILY: *(with dignity)* His name was Emmett. Emmett Till.

ABIGAIL: *(ignoring the comment)* I expect Mrs. Hudson and Miss Matthews will be here by one, so make sure the tea is cool by then. The petit-fours should be iced in lime green and cotton pink... they look so delicate that way.

LILY: Yes, Miss Abigail.

*(Abigail trails off in her mind, surveying the room)*

CLARE: Two hundred years of that venom runnin' through her veins.

ABIGAIL: *(justifying herself in her mind)* It was a way of life I was tryin' to preserve!

LILY: In those paper shacks behind the railroad? At twenty-five cents a day in the field?

ABIGAIL: The kind of refinement that comes from breeding.

CLARE: Breedin' what Mama?

LILY: Some kinda mad dog in heat.

ABIGAIL: *(turning Clare's hands)* They're not like you and me, baby. You're gonna make yourself sick with all these questions.

CLARE: *(withdrawing her hands from her mother's)* I was already sick.

*(Clare exits as Daisy begins to hum the song)*

ABIGAIL: *(in a patriotic fervor)* There's only one culture in this country, and the South's gotta preserve it. Ya ever been up North? There is nothin' there but a buncha dirty factories. All this talk about "civil rights." It's them tryin to stir things up. Why, they can't even get along with their own colored.

LILY: *(speaking from within her mind)* It's dead, Abigail. Been dead for a hundred years. You just afraid to close the casket.