

## **AIN'T I A WOMAN – audition material**

**ZORA:**

*(Enters as the life of the party)*

Well---my, my my! it “sho’ is all lit up in here!”

How is everybody! Hey---how you doin’!? Yes, it’s been a while--! It’s nice to meet you too...Zora Neale Hurston...Oh you do? Thank you. Yes—Thank you! Thank you! Yes, I *am* proud! I know you all been wondering what old Zora’s been up to since you last seen me. It’s my *first* novel! Yeah---well you wouldn’t think so, what with all that I’ve written and put out there, but, no—“Jonah’s Gourd Vine” *is* my bona-fide first novel!

Hmmmmm! Music is especially good tonight...he sounds really good. If I close my eyes, I’d swear that was Fats Waller over in that corner, ticklin’ those keys!

*(she hums a little of what is being played when she is interrupted)*

What? (slight pause) Afraid of reviews? Well—if you’re going to be a writer, you *must* deal with the reviews... of course, none have come out yet...but I’m ready...I’m growin’ me some thick skin right as we’re talkin’!

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### **CLEMENTINE HUNTER:**

*(an older, ornery Clementine chats to a curious fan who has stopped by her trailer to watch her paint)*

I would go to work durin' the day, come home an' fix Hunter his supper, then sit down an' start to paint. Some people passed by the cabin an' wanted my pictures. They wouldn't go away unless I would sell to 'em. So Francois made me a sign that said 'Art Exhibit. Admission 25 cents.' Jus' like I wanted. But, I worried I was cheatin' people, 'cause when the Lord give the gift of paintin' to me, he didn't say *rich* an' he didn't say *sell*. He jus' give it to me. So, if folks come here lookin' fo' an artist, I tell 'em I ain't no artist, I'm a painter. I sets things down in paint an' that is all there is to it, but I sure ain't no artist. Paintin' is a lot harder than pickin' cotton. Cotton's right there fo' you to pull off the stalk, but to paint you got to sweat yo' mind.

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**FANNIE LOU HAMER**

*(There is a knock at the door.)*

Yes? Who's there?

*(It is their landlord. She's not totally subservient, but it's clear that the landlord has a lot more power in this life than Fannie and her husband. Fannie moves towards the door.)*

Sir? Yes, sir?

*(slight pause and then she turns to Pap)*

It's the boss, old-man Marlowe...He wants us to come outside....Yes, sir?

Yes, sir---I went over to Indianola today. Well, I went there to register to vote, sir.

*(slight pause)*

Yes, sir---I like my job.

*(slight pause)*

Yes, sir. I knowed what you done for me, Mister Marlowe. Yes, sir. Bein' the time- keeper for the field hands is a lot better than most jobs that a female sharecropper can get in these times....an' I appreciate it sir. I also believe that I have done my job well.

*(slight pause)*

Not register to vote? Sir, I can't do that.

*(slight pause as she shakes her head)*

No, sir. I don't be callin' myself sayin' nothin' smart.....

*(slight pause)*

Leave this land?! Mister Marlowe---I didn't go down there to register for you. I went down there to register to vote for myself!

*(slight pause)*

Leave tonight?!

*(quietly)*

Yes, sir.

*(as he exits she tries to comfort Pap.)*

It's all right Pap. It's all right. Don't say nothin'. Don't do nothin'. We can thank God he's lettin' you stay on 'til the harvestin'. Let me pack some clothes an' see if Mary Tucker an' her family will let me stay with 'em in town for a while...

*(slight pause)*

Fair?! I don't know why you thinkin' on what's fair fo'! I been workin' here for 18 years. I baked cakes an' sent them overseas to that man durin' the war. I've nursed his family, cleaned his house, stayed with his kids...an' I've been handlin' his time book an' his payroll, fo' how long? An' now he wants me *out?! You an' I both knowed that white man has never been fair.*

*(slight pause)*

I'm a black Mississippian. We're the nitty gritty people, the ruralest of the ruralest, an' the poorest of the poorest! But, we gonna get ours. We gonna keep at it 'til we get it. An' that's all that anyone needs to know!