

After Miss Merle left with the two baskets, Lou went out in the road where Mapes was. They leaned back against Mapes's car talking and looking at us in the yard. Me, I was leaning back against the end of the gallery where you went 'round the house back to the toilet. Chimley had just come from the toilet, and 'fore he got back to the front I seen him ~~steeping~~ <sup>ending</sup> over and getting a shell out ~~of~~ the shoe box undr the house. He got two. He put one in the gun, the other one in his pocket. You see, that's what we had been doing all the time. Sure, we was going back to the toilet, but but we was foing more than just going to the toilet. Clatoo had already told us where he had put that box of shells, and every time one of us went to the toilet, and didn't catch one of them whitefolks watching us, we dicked down by the side of the house and got a couple shells out ~~of~~ that vox. And nobody knowed the difference.. Not my wife, Beulah, not one of the other women, and surely not that preacher, Jameson. Just the men with guns--black men, I mean--just us.

Clatoo didn't want me, Billy Washsngton, Jean Pierre, and Clabber to have live bullets. He said Billy and Jean Pierre was both a little minus in sight; he said Clabber blinked too much; and said I had never helt a gun in my hands before. That was true, all that was true. But we was there like everybody else, and we was go'n be treated like everybody else. Clatoo told us all right, but if a fight broke out he wanted us to stay out the way. We said we would stay out his way, but we was go'n do us bhare of ~~the~~ fighting. And all this was going on while Mapes and Lou was standing out there watching us.



Then we heard that noise on the <sup>car</sup> radio. I saw Mapes ~~lean over~~ open the door to reach the speaker. I could hear the static, then the other voice; the static again, then Mapes. It went on like this two or three minutes: stic, other voice; static, then Mapes. Then he hung up the speaker, and ~~huk~~ him and Lou came back in the yard. Mapes was grinning. Not out, in. You could tell by his face he was grinning inside, even if his mouth wasn't showing it.

"All right," he said. "Gather round me, I got some news. Some you may not like, but ~~like~~ <sup>it's a mean to you</sup> <sup>can!"</sup>

The people moved in slowly. They had been there a long time. Everybody was tired, but nobody was thinking about giving up and going home, n t till this was <sup>all settled</sup> ~~over~~ with.

The shadow from the house had crossed ~~the yard long ago, and now it had covered~~ the road. The cars, the tractor, the two twailors with the cane, all of that was in shadow. ~~was~~

It was getting just a little nippy. Not cold, mind you, Just nippy.

*this too*  
*lot,*  
*never*  
*said,*  
*ad.*  
*good*  
"Well, look like you were ~~had been~~ for a while

"All right," Mapes said. "The good news first. Fix ain't showing up." ~~That's music to my ears. Now the~~ ~~brave~~ ~~bad news for I'll.~~ You got brave thirty years too late."

*"He is not of y. old white cloth."*  
"Fix got to show up," Johnny Paul sadi. *"He got to show up."*

Johnny Paul was standing not more than a arm length from Mapes.. But Mapes's fist didn't spring up and hit Johnny Paul. Mapes just grinned at him. Not his mean everyday grin; but now it was a grin of relief. Mapes looked like a man who just heard he didn't have to go to the 'lectric chair. I never in my life seen a white man so happy. But ~~on us face~~ <sup>to us</sup> it was just the other way 'round. We wanted a fight. We had been wishing for a day like this all us life. Mapes knowed how we was feeling, and he was grinning inside at us.



"That don't sound like Fix to me, either," Clatoo said. Clatoo was still on the gallery. He hadn't moved when Mapes told us all to gethae round him.

"No, it don't sound like Fix," Mapes said to him. "But me and you, Clatoo, and all the rest of y'all was thinking about <sup>what</sup> Fix was thirty years ago. Thirty years ago, Fix woulda been here, and Mathu woulda been lynched by now. But today, that same Fix ain't showing up. You see that thing you people fought so hard for done played a role in this. Integration done robbed you of your day of glory. 'Salt' talked him out of it, in other words. 'Salt' and 'Pepper' you heard of them."

Mapes was happy. Oh, he was happy. The rest of us just looked at each other.

"What about them others?" Clatoo asked Mapes.

"What others?" Mapes said. He was happy. He d dn't want think about no others.

Clatoo just looked at him.

"Them?" Mapes said. "Russell said I might have some trouble with them. "But I think that pump gun can handle all that. " He turned to Mathu. "Well, Mathu, you ready to go with me?"

"I'm ready," Mathu said.

*close* Candy had been sitting on the steps all the time, staying quiet as a little mouse. But soon as she heard Mapes tell Mathu to let's go, she got up from the stekps and went and stood on the walk. Now Ma es had to go by her with Mathu to reach that car.

"What you think you doing?" Mapes asked her.

"If he goes, I go," Candy said.

"And if we go, we all go," my wife, Beulah, said. "That story about Fix ain't ~~showing up~~ ain't changed nothing."



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~~Now~~ the people ~~all~~ started lining up along the walk to follow Mathu out of the yard.

"Wait," Clatoo said. He had stood up on the gallery, and he was looking down at us on the ground. ~~"Wait. I been thinking. I been thinking about something." He looked at Mathu, he looked at Jacob, Mat Jefferson, a few of the other people..~~ "Can me and the rest of these men gather inside the house and talk?" he asked Mapes.

"Talk about what?" Mapes said. "That's all I've heard since I been here--talk. What more is there to talk about? More of them thirty year old stories?"

"Can we talk?" Clatoo asked again. "That can save everybody a lot of trouble."

"Nobody talking without me," Candy said. *Not* on my place."

"This time, I would hope you didn't come in, Candy," Clatoo told her.

"Like hellk," Candy said. "Who are you? You don't even live on this place."

"I know that, Candy," Clatoo told her. "But I still say just the men. Not the women, not that preacherk, just us black men with guns."

"Get the hell off my place," Candy said, looking up at Clatoo who was looking down at her.

"I'm not going anywhere now, Candy," he said.

"What did you say?" Candy said. She tried to make him look away from her, but he looked her right in the eyes. She looked at Mapes a second, but she knowed she couldn't get no help from Mapes.. Mapes even grinned at her. ~~He was glad Clatoo was talking back to her.~~ She looked back at Clatoo..

"You know where you're at?" she said.

"Sure, Candy," he said. "I still say I'm not going nowhere till all this is settled."



When Clatoo wouldn't lower his eyes or wouldn't look away from her, Candy turned to the rest of us.

"Y'all can listen to Clatoo if y'all want to," she said. "Clatoo got a house, a little piece of land to go back to, Y'all ain't got a thing. And you listen to him, I'll make sure you don't have a thing."

"Well, well, well," Mapes said. He was some happy.

"Well, well, well, listen to the savior now."

"You're trying to divide and conquer us," Candy said to Mapes.

"And you're trying to keep them your slaves," Mkares said back to her.

"Nobody is a slave around here," Candy said. "I'm protecting them like I've always done. Like my people have always done."

"Not like your people have always done, Candy," Mapes said. "At least your people let them talk.. That's why that church was built up there, so they would have a place to worship and talk. Now, you're trying to take that from them."

Candy didn't know how to answer Mapes, and she looked at Mathu.

"Mathu, you want to go in there and talk?" she asked him.

"You want to go in there and don't want me in there with you? Is that what you want, Mathu?"

Mathu ~~was~~ looked at her. You could see he was tired; tired like all the rest of us was tired. He shook his head.

"I just want what they want and get it over with," he said.

"Well, I don't want it," Candy said. "And I won't have it."

Sandy ran by us and jumped on the gallery. Then she got in the door and spread out her arms to keep anybody from going in.



"Come down from there," Mapes said to her. Candy didn't move. Little arms stretched all the way out, blocking the door. "Griffin," Mapes said to that little deputy. "Go up there and pull her 'way from that door."

"I'll bust his jaw if he come up here," Candy said.

"You heard me , Griffin?" Mapes said again.

Griffin looked up at Candy. He made two steps toward the gallery and stopped. The people laughed at him.

Mapes looked at Griffin. If Griffin was standing anywhere near Mapes, Mapes woulda popped him.

"Come ~~on~~ on doen, Candy," Lou told her. "Don't make a spectacle of yourself."

"She's done that already," Mapes said. "Tell her don't make a bigger ass of herself."

We all looked at Candy blocming the door. My wife Beulah laughed aut loud. "That's a girl, Candy, stand l your ground," she said.

Mathu said something to Mapes, then he went up ~~then~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~two~~ steps. He was tired, and thwo of the steps was missin, but he managed to get up on the gallery. He went to Candy and put his hand on his shoulder. Candy laid her face against his hand, and all of us there could see she was crying.

"It's over with," Mathu told her. "I <sup>here</sup> got to go." <sup>now."</sup>

"No." her hafce was still on his hand. "Nok," she said.

"You can always come to see me."

" No," she said. "No."

"That's what I want."

"No," she said. She raised her head and looked at him. "No."



Lou had got up on the gallery now, and he was standing next to Mathu.

"Come on, Candy," he said, reaching out his hand.

"Come on, now."

"Nothing is going to change," Candy said to Mathu. "I don't care what you all talk about in there, nothing is going to change. He take you to jail or not, you'll be out tomorrow. I don't care what y'all talk about. You belong here. This where you belong. Belong here on this place with me. God take you, nobody else."

"Come on, Candy," ou told her, and took her by the arm.

She grabbed Mathu's arm. Lou <sup>pulled</sup> ~~jecked~~ on her, but she held on to Mathu. Till Mathu, himself, pried her hands from his arm. Lou put h s arm rou d her waist and picked her up clean off the floor. The people on the walk moved out his way. to let him pass. He <sup>looked out to the car</sup> ~~got~~ her in her own car and slammed the door.. Then he just stood there ~~with his arms~~ <sup>with his arms</sup>

~~folded~~ <sup>the man with gun</sup> against the door with his arms folded, <sup>body bent over</sup> ~~folded~~ <sup>the gun</sup>. We went inside the house. It was dark in the room, and Clztoo ~~turned on the light~~ pulled the string that turned on the light.

"Somebody shut that door," Clatoo said. "Somebody catch that window."

Billy washington was the last person to come inside, and he closed the door. Rufe closed the window. It was pretty hot and stuffy in here now with both the door and window closed.

Clatoo stood next to the fireplace, and leaned 'gainst the mantlepiece. He was tired like everybody else. We was all tired.

"Y'all know why I asked you in?" Clatoo asked.



Couple of the peo le said they did. The rest of us  
just waited.

"You know whym, Mathu?" Clatoo asked him.

Mathu ~~stand next to him~~ was standing next to him.

He nodded his head.