

"Well?" she said.

"My name's Jane Pittman," I said.

"I didn't ask you that," she said. "What you want?"

"I'm working here," I said.

"No, you ain't," she said. "I don't need nobody spying on me."

"Spying?" I said.

"Get out my way 'fore I lam' you up side the head," she said.

She didn't give me time to move. She pushed me side the head and I fell on the ground. I brushed off my clothes and went in the kitchen where she was. She was lighting a fire in the firehalf. When she got through she looked at me standing there.

"You don't hear good, do you?" she said.

I was go'n tell her I didn't want be there in the first place, I rather be out in the field, but she grabbed me and pitched me back outside. I fell flat on my face, my hands covered with chicken and guinea stuff. I wiped my hands in the grass and went back in the kitchen. Molly was singing. She didn't even stop. She just grabbed me, still singing, and slammed me back out there. While I was sailing in the air I was hoping I hit a clean spot. That was like hoping I didn't hit the ground.

I wiped off my hands and clothes and went back in. Molly just stood there looking at me now. When she went back to the firehalf I got the broom and started sweeping. She jeked the broom out my hand and throwed it back in the corner. I kept out of her way after that, but I watched everything she did. After she got through cooking, she took the food to the house. I waited and waited for her to come back. When she didn't, I went over to the house, too. The white people was sitting at the table eating. One white lady was just coming in the dining room. She was Mr. Clyde's daughter, Miss Clare.

"You must be Jane," she said.

"Yes ma'am," I said.

"You'll take care the children, Jane."

"I don't need nobody taking care them children," Molly said. "I can cook and take care them children."

Miss Clare didn't answer Molly. She looked at the side of my face and my forrid.

"You hurt anywhere else?" she asked me.

I touched my forrid, and I had a knot up there the size of a marble.

Miss Clare looked at the side of my face again. She was too much of a lady to tell me I had some guinea stuff there. I could see her mouth working like she wanted to say some thing, then she pressed her lips tight. Then her nose worked a little bit like she was smelling something. All this time

she was looking straight in my eyes. She wanted me to guess what she didn't want tell me.

One of the children at the table looked at me and pointed his finger. "Caw-caw," he said. Then everybody else at the table looked at me, and all of them ^{bust} out laughing. I touched the spot they was looking at, and it was there, all right.

Molly didn't want nobody else working in that house with her, scared the person would take her place. She had been with the Clyde family ever since she was a young lady. She had been the cook, she had been the nurse. But now she was in her sixties, and they thought she was getting old and needed help. Molly didn't think she needed help. She was scared if she got help the next thing the other person would be taking over. She had had it pretty easy all her life, and she wasn't go'n let nobody take it from her. The people tried to show Molly they didn't want nobody else to take her place. "We love you, that's why we want people here to help you," they told her. But Molly didn't see it that way. And she made everybody who came there to work pay ^{for it.} She would spill hot ashes on the floor and swear you was trying to burn the house down. If she heard one of the children crying she would swear you had done him something wrong. If you had to make a fire in the firehalf or you had to make up a bed she would find something wrong with it every time. She did everything to

31

32

get rid of you; then after she had got you out she couldn't take care the work ^{by herself.}

Molly tried to get rid of me just like she had got rid of all the others. She had told lies on them till the white people had to let them go. When the white people found out she was telling lies and refused to fire the servants Molly vexed them and vexed them till they quit themselves. When that didn't work on me she went to the white people crying. She was quitting because they didn't love her no more. She said she had wet nurse Miss Clare and now Miss Clare was the main one trying to put her out in the cold. They told Molly that wasn't true, they wanted her there, they wanted her there the rest of her life. Molly said they didn't want her, they wanted me.

One day she told them she was leaving. They told her she couldn't leave, she had been with them most of her life. She said me or her, one of us had to go. Miss Clare said I wasn't going, but she didn't want Molly to go either. She told me herself that she loved Molly much as she loved anybody and she wanted Molly to spend the rest of her life there with them. Molly said me or her, one had to go. I told them let me go in the field. No, they said.

Molly went to Deritter and got a job looking after an old lady there. I think for the first six months after Molly

left, Miss Clare cried for Molly every day. She would go to Deritter every week to see Molly. If she didn't go to Molly, Molly came there to see her. They would sit in that front room and talk for hours. Molly would spend the night and go back the next day. I went to Miss Clare and told her I was quitting. She told me if I did, she ~~would~~ ^{had} just ~~had~~ to get somebody else. I told her I didn't care what she did, I was quitting. I went home and told Joe I had ~~quit~~ ^{quit}. Joe told me if I didn't get back up to that house he was go'n take a stick and run me back up there.

Molly died four or five years after that. The doctor said she died from old age, but Molly died from a broken heart. They brought her back to the place and buried her in the family plot. One of the things I'll always regret, me and Molly never got to be friends. Maybe in the Beyond we will meet again and I'll have a chance to tell her I never meant any harm. I think up there she will understand much better than she did down here.