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# **Their Eyes Were Watching God**

By Zora Neale Hurston

(woman) I remember when I first read  
this book, I fell in love with the story,  
It was one of the most beautiful,  
poignant love stories  
I'd ever read,

This is a story about a woman  
allowing herself to be a full woman  
and not subjected to the definition or  
identity others have carved out for her,  
The first time Janie and Tea Cake kiss  
reinvents the whole idea  
and notion of kissing,

I would have to say  
that if you can get a kiss like that,  
you can die a happy woman,

When this movie airs, Zora Neale Hurston, wherever she is, is gonna give a  
shout

(woman) There's two things  
everybody got to find out for theyselves,  
They got to find out about love,  
and they got to find out about livin',

(woman) Now, love is like the sea,  
It's a movin ' thing,  
And it's different on every shore,  
And livin',,,

Well,

I just come back from buryin' the dead,

(man) Is that Miss Starks?

Sure enough Iooks Iike

Miss Starks' Iooksome features,

Yes, 'cept Miss Starks

wouldn't be wearin' no coveralls,

That Tea Cake,

That's what happens when you run off

with a yellow fellow Iike Tea Cake,

Oh, you just mad

'cause she ain't run off with you!

(men laugh)

Ain't no way in the world

that's Mrs, Mayor Starks,

No way in the world,

Janie?

Lord, we been worried sick about you!

Go to hell,

- What you say?  
- I said afternoon, Ladies,  
Jasper, Run get Miss Phoebe, You tell her  
her friend Miss Janie come back,  
(boy) Yes, ma'am,  
I told you she'd come runnin' back here,  
Crawlin' back, Didn't I?  
(plays slow tune)  
(women's voices outside)  
(woman #2) What's she doin' with long  
hair down her back, like some young gal?  
(woman) Where's Tea Cake,  
that's what I want to know,  
Weren't she a widow woman, almost 40?  
That young boy  
weren't never gonna marry her,  
I covered up your furniture an' all,  
I thank you,  
You sure look good,  
Shoot, you look like your own daughter,  
Girl, you talkin'  
like you think I brought you something,  
I ain't brought home nothing but myself,  
That's a gracious plenty,  
Your friends wouldn't want nothing better,  
Girl, go on and bring me them rations  
you done brought in here,  
- Thank you,  
- Janie,  
Here you go,  
If that Tea Cake ever shows his behind in  
Eatonville again, he gonna wish he hadn't,  
He knew that you had just lost Joe, so he  
took advantage of you, and your money,  
He ain't wasted none of my money,  
And if he was here,  
But he gone,  
Ain't he?  
He dragged you down to his level,  
and then,,,  
- Y'all think he did me wrong,  
- Janie, we all know he did you wrong,  
Well, I ain't stunned what they think,  
You don't care what I think neither, do you?

You left this town,  
Me and Tea Cake had us a real Iove,  
You got the nerve to come back up in here  
with no shoes on your feet,  
and nothing but overalls on your back,  
making everything we believed in  
look like dirt,  
- Me and Tea Cake had a real Iove,  
- How could you do that?  
- Y'all couldn't see that,  
- I used to look up to you,  
Phoebe,  
The only way you,  
and this whole town, ever seen me  
was as Mrs, Mayor Starks,  
Sittin' out there on that porch,  
Silk dresses on,  
All high an' mighty.  
Just as ladylike as you please,  
That might have been the Janie y'all knew,  
But that wasn't the Janie I ever was,  
(Janie) You see,  
I ain't never known my poppa, or my ma,  
My grandmomma raised me,  
I was born sorta knowing things,  
Like how the trees and the wind talk,  
I told the seeds when they was fallin',  
"I sure hope y'all fall on soft ground,"  
That year,  
something about me was different,  
It's like my life was starting  
right at that moment,  
Hey, Johnny T aylor,  
- How you doin', Janie?  
- I'm all right,  
Janie!  
How long you been lettin' Johnny Taylor  
kiss on you? What is wrong with you?  
Ain't nothing wrong with me, Nanny.  
- We was,,,  
- I seen what you was doin',  
You was just lettin' that trashy boy, that  
breath an' britches, wipe his feet on you,  
- He wasn't wipin' his feet on me,

- The woman is the mule of the world,  
I didn't mean no harm, Nanny,  
You don't even know what harm is, girl,  
Yeah, You gonna get married right away,  
- To Johnny Taylor?  
- No, child,  
I'd wanted you to school out,  
but that ain't your idea, I see,  
Why,,,  
Why, I ain't ready to get married,  
Oh, So you don't want to marry off decent,  
You want to be Iike your momma was,  
You want to run wild, break my heart,  
Someone good and decent's  
been asking after you for a while now,  
Brother Logan Killicks,  
Logan Killicks?  
That's what he been  
hangin' around here for?  
He look Iike  
some old skull head in a graveyard,  
Brother Killicks got 60 acres,  
And he's good and decent,  
I don't care what he got,  
(Janie) Nanny took the horizon  
and pinched it into a little bit of a thing,  
(Nanny) Janie?  
Janie, what in the world are you doing?  
I'm watching God,  
Now, y'all want to make sure his dinner's  
always hot when he comes home  
and the floor's swept clean in the morning,  
And... be... bewelcomin'to him.  
Here he comes,  
Dry your eyes,  
How do,  
Miss Janie,  
(Janie) We got married,  
just like Nanny wanted,  
It was true, Logan was good and decent,  
I was a proper married woman,  
But I was still waiting for love to begin,  
(Logan) Girl! Come on, now,  
Lord, I woke up this morning

I looked around in my room  
When I woke up this morning  
I looked around in my room  
I said, "Hello, blues  
"Now, what you doin' in here so soon?"  
I knowed it was the blues  
'cause I heard 'em walking in my room  
I knowed it was the blues  
'cause I heard 'em walking in my room  
Lord, I wonder what's the matter  
that the blues just won 't leave me alone  
oh, blues, blues  
Won't you let poor me be  
oh, blues, blues  
Won't you let poor me be  
And let me have one day  
out of the seven days a week  
I'm goin' over Hamilton County,  
get us another plow,  
- Can I go with you?  
- You stay here, help me out some,  
That porch need cleanin',  
Cut up them seed potatoes,  
Don't spend all day daydreamin',  
Slaughter that runt, and bleed 'im good,  
I want chops for dinner,  
So that's a no?  
Next time,  
OK, Oh,,,  
Move it, Go on,  
Go on, before you become ham hocks,  
- Put my pig down,  
- Not if you're givin' him to the foxes,  
I'm tryin' to let him go, Put him down!  
Go on, Go on,  
Think you're bein' kind?  
He'll be dead before morning,  
I ain't kind in no kind of way,  
Your momma and poppa gonna  
give you hell for settin' them pigs free,  
They dead, And I don't care  
what my husband thinks, neither,  
Husband?  
Went to get a plow,

so I can help in the fields,  
Lord, gal,  
you got no more business behind a plow  
than a hog got with a holiday,  
Pretty Iady Iike you need to be treated  
Iike a Iady every single day of your Iife,  
My name is Joe Starks, I'm from Georgia,  
Where you headin', Mr, Starks?  
Down the road a ways, Some colored folks  
got together, made their own town,  
All-coloredtown?You...  
Yeah, they called it Eatonville,  
I'm plannin' to get there  
while the town's still a baby,  
Seem Iike a tall tale to me,  
Maybe you need  
to come with me and see it,  
Can't,  
Guess you better get goin',  
If you change your mind,  
tomorrow after the sun come up,  
I'm gonna be waitin' on you,  
Right down that road,  
Mr, Starks!  
Keep it,  
What would you do if I was to Ieave you?  
Leave me?  
You but 1 7 years old,  
You don't know nothing about the world,  
I know enough,  
You don't appreciate my good treatment,  
do you?  
No, it ain't that,  
Janie,  
I got 60 acres,  
And I ain't no young man,  
in no kind of way,  
When I pass,  
everything I got passes to you,  
But what if I was to Ieave you?  
What would you do?  
Do what you got to do,  
I'm goin' to sleep,  
(Janie) Joe Starks had spoke

about change, And chance,  
And even if he wasn't there waiting for me,  
the change was bound to do me good,  
Hey, girl!

(Janie) I thought I was gonna have  
flower dust and springtime  
sprinkled over everything,  
Joe bought me all kinds  
of pretty new clothes,  
And I became Mrs, Joe Starks,  
Can you fellows tell us  
how far we at from Eatonville?  
We hopin' to get there by nightfall,  
Y'all in Eatonville now,  
This is it?  
This is it,  
This don't look iike  
nothing but a raw place in the woods,  
Well, we only been a town for about a year,  
Place is just getting started,  
Got Iots to look forward to,  
Amen.

She's right,  
Y'all got a lot of opportunity here,  
Why don't you and your daughter  
join us for supper?  
I'm a really good cook,  
and I'd be really happy to have you,  
Amos Hicks is my name,  
and I ain't got no wife as yet,  
And I ain't nowhere near old enough  
to have a daughter, Mr, Hicks,  
This here's my wife,  
If you and your wife  
is thinkin' about settlin' here,  
you're welcome to stay with my family,  
Until we build our own house,  
We'd be happy to put you up,  
Willy, tie up his horse,  
- (man) Yeah,  
- We thank you,  
I'm gonna get me a wife just iike that,  
You ain't got  
but a fish sandwich to your name,



You can't get the Likes of her  
with no fish sandwich,  
(Joe) How many acres y'all got now?  
- 'Bout 50,  
- That ain't enough for no town,  
Well, we was real fortunate that Captain  
Eaton gave us the acres to get started,  
Captain Eaton own the sawmill  
we work in, He's a fairer man than most,  
Y'all want this to be  
a town of significance, don't you?  
Sure, but Captain Eaton  
ain't gonna give us no more land now,  
Cap'n Eaton?  
He's generous, but he ain't stupid,  
He might not give you no more,  
but you can buy more,  
Been a town a whole year, You would think  
they'd have more happening by now,  
They just need you to show 'em what to do,  
I pray to God  
they ain't a bunch of lazy no-counts,  
They need a leader, that's all,  
Look to me like Joe Starks'd  
be the perfect man for the job,  
Look at this face, Good-lookin' enough  
to be on a silver dollar,  
This chest,,, strong and broad,  
Bet you got a big speech-making voice  
in there, don't you?  
These hands,,, Lord knows, these hands  
We'll buy a hundred acres,  
And then we'll buy a hundred more,  
I'll sell the land we don't need  
to newcomers,  
and we'll put Eatonville  
in the middle of the map,  
And with the money we make,  
we'll buy you your very own train guard,  
and we gonna  
crisscross this country first class,  
Call me Jody like you do sometimes,  
Call me Jody,  
Jody,,,

He ain't gonna buy nothing,  
I'm tellin' you, He all talk,  
I been tellin' y'all  
we needs to buy more land, ain't I?  
(man) Lord, I don't know,  
I hope he can,,,  
- (man) Now what?  
- Joe pullin' out his money,  
He gonna buy more land, I told y'all!  
Captain Eaton's signin' the paper!  
- (woman) What you see?  
- (man) Shh!  
- And Joe done signed the paper too!  
- (cheering and shouting)  
(Janie) The next day,  
we all voted Joe to be the mayor,  
Wasn't nobody  
more proud of him than me,  
Hold on,  
(Janie) He just strolled around,  
all wrapped up in his new dignity,  
Thinkin', plannin' our future,  
And I was right there with him,  
ready to help,  
Some folks need thrones and  
ruling chairs to make their influence felt,  
But not Joe,  
He had a throne in the seat of his pants,  
When the new families came,  
the land we bought made us a good profit,  
And we invested the money  
back into Eatonville,  
- In the kitchen, Thank you,  
- Which way, Mrs, Starks?  
- That goes upstairs,  
- (notes on piano)  
Can't neither one of us play it,  
This ain't for playin',  
This is just for lookin' at,  
Shoot, Jody!  
This is the life  
Nanny always dreamed of me havin',  
We did it,  
She'd be so happy,

Are you happy?

Yeah,

(man) Mr, Starks, Ma'am,

- I got it,

- Steady, steady,

Come on!

- I hope they got my ribbon,

- Y'all comin'?

Since I had my three children,

I just ain't got the figure I used to,

You know you look like

a young gal in that dress,

Sam says the mayor of Orlando's comin',

And someone

from the governor's office, too,

- Well, you know what that means, Ladies,

- What?

- We in the big house now!

- Isn't it gorgeous?

We should go, See you later!

It's pretty,

You think Joe gonna like it?

Course he'll like it,

Janie?

You and Joe changed everythin',

Just feels like anything's possible now,

Lord, I done,,, I done run over the mayor!

Almost, Phoebe. Almost.

OK,

(Joe laughs)

I ordered it from

the finest Ladies' store in Orlando,

Oh!

Must have cost a lot,

Look at this one, This is the one

the Ladies made me, Ain't it pretty?

Yeah, but it ain't befitting of a mayor's wife,

You're the bell cow,

Those other women, they're your gang,

No other wife,

I'm gonna show you the world,

Remember?

(band plays ragtime)

Try as he might, Frank Taylor

can't seem to control that wife of his,  
Hell, if she was my wife,  
I'd kill her cemetery dead,  
(woman) Oh, come here!  
Where you goin' with them cookies?  
Come on, now,  
Oh, shoot! Gimme those cookies,  
Come here, boy,  
I'm tellin' you, in five years' time,  
Eatonville is gonna be the county seat,  
- Well, all right, I hear what you say,  
- Five years' time,  
This is gonna be  
the county seat right here,  
You hear what I say, you mark my words,  
- Hard work, Determination,  
- (man) A lot of that,  
(Joe) If we expect to move on, we got to  
stand up and do things right around here,  
- (man) You're right about that,  
- We got to organize,,,  
- You see her paradin' round up there?  
- Mm-hm,  
I reckon the dress we done made  
ain't good enough for Mrs, Mayor Starks,  
She up there with the men,  
Too good to help us out,  
(Joe) I plan to make Eatonville become  
the colored capital of the state of Florida,  
'Cause this town,,,  
is full of union and love,  
I plans to put my hands to the plow,  
and strain every nerve,  
to make our town of Eatonville  
the metropolis of the state,  
And to that effect, let's get started tonight  
with a little surprise I got for you,  
Our incorporation,  
Eatonville is now  
the first colored incorporated township  
in all of America,  
Everybody!  
Let's,,, let's have a few words of  
encouragement from Mrs, Mayor Starks,

Come on, say something,  
(Amos) Mrs, Mayor Starks,  
Come on, Come on up,  
Thank you for your compliments,  
But Mrs, Mayor Starks don't know about no  
speech-makin', I didn't marry her for that,  
Brother Pastor,  
Aswetouchthisflametothis matchwick,  
Iet the Iight shine into the hearts  
of all of you gathered here tonight,  
(man) Amen,  
- Let it shine, Iet it shine, Iet it shine!  
(women) This Iittle Iight of mine  
(all) I'm gonna Iet it shine  
This Iittle Iight of mine  
I'm gonna Iet it shine  
This Iittle Iight of mine  
I'm gonna Iet it shine  
Let it shine, Iet it shine, Iet it shine  
- How d'you Iike being Mrs, Mayor?  
- It's all right, I reckon,  
All right?  
You ought to be glad,  
I think it keep us in a kinda strain,  
- I'II be glad when it's over,  
- Over?  
Girl, I ain't even got started good,  
I'm gonna be a big voice,  
And you ought to be glad,  
I'm gonna make a big woman out of you,  
- That's your move?  
- Oh, I don't know about that,  
- What? That Iook Iike a good move to me,  
- Yeah, it Iook Iike a good move to me too,  
One, two, three,,,  
Look Iike your husband need  
some new eyeballs for Christmas,  
My eyeballs is just fine, OK? My eyeballs  
is just fine, You cheatin', that's all,  
(chatter continues)  
Janie! Janie,  
Get in here, You got some work to do,  
Ma'am,  
What do you mean, tipping your hat

to her? She ain't the queen of England,  
Everybody can't be Iike you, Jody,  
Folks is bound to Iaugh and play,  
- Who don't want to Iaugh and have fun?  
- Well, you make Iike you don't,  
If they'd Iaugh Iess and work more,  
maybe they'd have something,  
But no, but they want to work day in  
and day out Iike beasts of burden,  
and don't end up with nothin' but a  
full belly and somewhere to Iie down after,  
- Do you expect me to be Iike that?  
- No,  
But I don't want to be classed off  
from my friends, and my neighbors,  
You don't Iike me being mayor,,,  
,,,do you?  
- Joe, we was going places,,,  
- I ain't even got started good here yet,  
and you already want to run off?  
(man) Oh, she gonna run off!  
Looks Iike big Mr, Mayor and the missis  
done had a fallin' out,  
Here, You put this on,  
What? Wrap my head up  
Iike an old woman?  
- How come?  
- 'Cause I done told you to,  
You are the mayor's wife, Remember?  
Janie, Janie!  
Janie,  
Whoo, what the devil got into them?  
- What the hell you doing?  
- What the hell you think?  
- Janie!  
- Can't Iive with you no more,  
Where you gonna go? Oh, now,  
who the hell would ever have you?  
You had nothing when I met you, and you'II  
have Iess than nothing when you Ieave me,  
Janie,  
Nobody would marry you, Not now,  
- Get off me!  
- I'II Iet you go, But you gonna hear me!

All you'll end up as  
is somebody's good-time gal,  
You know, the kind that men use  
Now, you go,  
Shame, shame, don't you know, Lord  
Yes, my Lord, I know, Lord  
Shame, shame, don't you know, Lord  
(Janie) Every morning  
I flung open the window to another day,  
And every day had a store in it,  
I wasn't petal open any more,  
I had an inside and an outside now,  
And I knew how not to mix 'em,  
Days seemed to just run together,  
We had us a routine,  
Breakfast at dawn,  
Lunch at noon,  
And dinner by six,  
Eatonville had plenty to be proud of,  
While I was livin' a good life,  
it was Joe's life,  
Not mine,  
Now, if we can stop this boy  
cheatin' once in a while,,,  
- You done had 20 years,,,  
- Wait a minute,,,  
Boy, what is wrong with you? You got  
a sandbag where your brain should be?  
- No, sir,  
You can't mess up all my profit, droppin',,,  
- Brother Mayor,  
How 'bout cuttin' me a plug  
of that fine tobacco there?  
(Joe) All right,  
I'll get that for you, Sam,  
Lord have mercy! Looky here,  
Your wife gone buck wild  
with that plug cuttin',  
You be round this store till you old as  
Methuselah, You still won't learn nothin',  
Don't stand there a-studyin' me, with your  
pop eyes and your little narrow behind,  
Quit mixin' up my doings with my looks,  
then,

You outta your mind, talkin' Iike that,  
I'm mayor,  
You the one started it,  
Don't be gettin' insulted about your Iooks,  
You give me no children,  
Now you an old Iady, Nearly 40,  
Ain't nobody Iookin' at you, old as you is,  
Well, I ain't 40, I'm only 38,  
You ways past 50,  
Let's talk about that,  
And this big fat belly you got,  
You talk a whole Iotta brag, Joe, But ain't  
nothing big about you but your voice,  
Hell, pull down your britches,  
Iook Iike you hit the change of Iife,  
- What you say to me?  
- You heard her, You ain't blind,  
I'd rather be shot dead  
than hear that about my own self,  
What you say to me?  
(Phoebe) Janie!  
Joe gived you everything you could want,  
You're not happy  
because you expect too much,  
(Janie) Something fell off the shelf  
inside me,  
It was Joe,  
He tumbled down and shattered,  
(labored breathing)  
(Joe) Doctor say that I'm dyin',  
I guess you come to watch,  
Jody,  
Maybe I ain't been  
such a good wife to you,  
But you gave me everything  
a woman could ever dream of havin',  
And I thank you,  
But Jody, you and me  
done been together now for 20 years,  
And you don't know me half at all,  
I know you,  
You changed from that Jody  
I run off down the road with,  
I wanted to keep a house with you



in a wonderful way,  
but you wasn't really  
satisfied with me the way I was,  
I built a whole town for us,  
- But that ain't good enough for you,  
- It was just that my own feelings  
had to be squeezed and crowded out of me  
to make room for yours in me,  
Blame everything on me,  
I don't let you show me no feelin', huh?  
Janie, that's all I ever wanted,  
Ain't tryin' to blame nothing on you, Joe,  
But all this bowin' down and obedience,  
It just ain't what I run off with you for,  
Shut up!  
Shut up,  
Even now, you got to die  
with me bein' obedient,  
Instead of lettin' me love you,  
I hope,,,  
that thunder and lightning',,,  
kill you,  
Get outta here,  
Get lost! (gasps)  
Jody?  
Poor Jody,,,  
Sittin' in that rulin' chair  
was hard for you too,  
(Janie) Whatever folks  
thought of Joe while he was livin',  
they turned out for his funeral,  
and cried over him,  
'Cause whether they liked him or not,  
they knew he had been a good man,  
and that his passin' was a great loss,  
I felt the sadness too,  
But alongside the sadness,  
I was feelin ' something else,  
I was feelin ' free,  
There's a new day coming  
Everything gonna be turning over  
Everything gonna be turning over  
Where you gonna be standing  
when it comes?

There's a new day coming  
Everything gonna be turning over  
Everything gonna be turning over  
Where you gonna be standing  
when it comes?  
For far too many years  
I been marching, singing and talking  
Doing things I thought  
would make me free  
Why, people halfway around the world  
They been fighting  
and dying and bleeding  
Now it seems that they are gonna be  
There's a new world coming  
Everything gonna be turning over  
Everything gonna be turning over  
Sun feels so good, don't it?  
Joe's been dead almost a year,  
And Amos Hicks got a pretty good job now,  
(Janie giggles)  
I ain't thinkin' about no Amos!  
Shoot, I'm enjoyin' my freedom too much,  
Janie, don't let nobody hear you say that,  
And, and,,, and folks'II think  
I don't care what folks think,  
And to my thinkin',  
mournin' shouldn't last  
a second longer than the grief do,  
- Afternoon,  
- Can I get you something?  
Got any smokin' tobacco?  
Sure do,  
Got a little piece of fire over there, lady?  
Mm-hm,  
So how come you ain't  
over there at the ball game?  
Everybody else in town is there,  
Well, not everybody,  
Lady just sold me some cigarettes,  
I only had train fare for part of the way,  
so I figured  
I'd catch me a ride with someone,  
Good luck,  
'Cause all the cars in Eatonville has gone,

Guess I'll walk then,  
I got pretty good shoe leather,  
How about you  
playin' me some checkers?  
You look hard to beat,  
I am, 'Cause I can't play a lick,  
You a wild one,  
Oh, man, girl,,,  
Wait!  
Not my king,  
But not my king, no! Not my,,,  
Any one, but not my,,,  
You gonna be a good player after a while,  
You think?  
I'll come and teach you some more  
another time,  
You could teach me,,,  
so long as you don't cheat me,  
How 'bout a cool drink?  
Why, thank you, Mr,,,  
You ain't even told me your name,  
My momma named me Vergible Woods,  
but most everybody call me Tea Cake,  
Tea Cake, huh?  
You as sweet as all that?  
Why don't you try me and see?  
You look scared,  
I ain't scared,  
'Night, now,  
(Janie) You and the whole town had  
decided I should get me a new husband,  
And Amos Hicks was thinkin'  
he was the fellow with the best chance,  
Shoot, in Amos's mind,  
me and him was already engaged,  
- Sure is hot,  
- Yeah, I never did like the heat,  
I was much more  
of a cold weather kind of man,  
- Now I done heard everything,  
- But you know what I'm gonna do?  
I'm gonna marry Miss Janie, take her  
over to Chicago, have a honeymoon there,  
You gonna have to

get up off her porch first,  
(laughter and chatter continues)  
How you doin'? Y'all mind if I join you?  
- What's your name?  
- They call me Tea Cake,  
You look like you need a drink,  
It's hot and sweaty,  
(Tea Cake) Why, thank you for the soda,  
and I'll square it with you,,,  
(Phoebe) Take some time out,  
and sit there,  
I sure will, Janie?  
Come on over here  
and play checkers with us,  
I'm sorry, but you don't know  
Miss Mayor Starks, son,  
She don't play no checkers,  
She do now,  
I ain't that good,  
- I'll teach you,  
- No, no, son,  
I'm gonna coach her,  
Sit right here, Mrs, Starks,  
I appreciate that, Amos,  
Now, you gotta picture it like this,  
Here you are, you're a general, right?  
And this right here, these are your troops.  
- You're the best player in the whole state,  
- Thanks, Phoebe,  
Now, what to do, if you can get your pieces  
to move to the other side of the board,  
if you can get 'em there,  
you get to become a king, if,,,  
What?  
Good night, Hezekiah,  
It's late, Miss Starks,  
- I'll walk you home,  
- (Tea Cake) That's OK,  
I'll walk her,  
I'm hungry,  
Well, I got some pound cake,  
I got some lemonade,  
- Taste,  
- I done tasted a lemon before,

Shh! I hear noise,  
(laughter)  
There ain't nobody out there, Pearl,  
Pearl, Pearl!  
- Like I aughin',  
- Laughin', From Mayor Starks's house?  
No, that can't be,  
Guess I'm gonna  
put these old bones to bed,  
You ain't old in no kind of way,  
Besides, the night's too pretty  
for anybody to be sleepin' it away,  
Wait, Where you goin'?  
- Let's us go fishin',  
- Fishin'?  
- Come on, Fishin',  
- This time of night?  
- Oh, yeah, Best time, Best time, Come on,  
- We can't go fishin'! Wait,,,  
(Tea Cake) Don't you make me fall!  
(Tea Cake plays harmonica)  
- A fish! I got a fish,  
- Hold him, now,  
Yeah!  
("Billy Lyons and Stackolee"  
by Furry Lewis on radio)  
I remember one September  
on one Friday night  
Stackolee and Billy Lyons  
had a great fight  
When you lose your money,  
learn to lose  
Billy Lyons shot six bits  
Stackolee bet he passed  
Stackolee out with his, 45,  
said, "You done shot your last"  
When you lose your money,  
learn to lose  
Lord, a woman come a-runnin '  
Fell down on her knees  
Crying "oh, Mr, Stackolee,  
don 't shoot my brother please"  
(plays a slow tune)  
(Janie plays discord)

- (Tea Cake) This one here,  
- Uh-huh,  
(Tea Cake) Right there, And this one  
right here, and spread 'em Iike that,  
That's the first one, all right?  
And now come this way,,,  
(plays discord)  
Let me try,  
Remember that?  
(Janie plays chords)  
- You're real pretty,  
- I'm real old,  
Oh, you got the world in a jug,  
and you don't even know it,  
I'm glad to be the one to tell you,  
I'II bet you tell plenty of women that,  
I tells 'em and I show 'em,  
Young man Iike you,,,  
I bet you're real popular, ain't you?  
Folks Iike me all right,  
if that's what you mean,  
Whoo!  
Sittin' here talkin' to you  
done made me real tired,  
Your heart just left you  
and went somewhere else,  
Where my heart is  
shouldn't make no difference to you,  
I ain't one of your Iady friends,  
You sure ain't one of my Iady friends,  
'cause I don't got but one,  
What I'm sayin' is,  
well, you sorta got me at your mercy,  
I'm nearly 1 2 years older than you,  
I've thought all about that,,,  
tryin' to make some kind of sense of it,  
But the thought of my youngness  
just don't,,,  
don't satisfy me Iike your presence do,  
Well, it make a whole heap  
of difference to most folks,  
Things Iike that  
got everything to do with convenience,  
Don't got nothing to do with Iove,

Love,  
You don't know nothing about Iove,  
You're just sayin' that 'cause the fish  
and corn bread tasted real good, ain't you?  
Those ain't nothing  
but your night thoughts,  
Night, Miss Janie,  
What the hell I need some young fool,,,  
(knocking)  
Did I wake you?  
No,  
Kinda early,  
I want to tell you my daytime thoughts,  
seein' as how  
you don't trust my nighttime ones,  
You sounded Iike  
you needed tellin' and showin',  
so that's what I'm doin',  
I bet you're hungry,  
Come on, I'll make you some breakfast,,,  
No, no, I ain't got time now,  
I got a job, I got to be there by eight,  
I'll see you later, Tell you straight,  
Hey,  
Your jacket,  
What a pretty mournin' dress,  
- What shade of black is that?  
- (car approaches)  
- The same shade as yours,  
- (car horn)  
- Where you get this car?  
- Won it off this guy,  
- She said they was goin' on a picnic,  
- She looks happy,  
Sashayin' off in that pink linen dress,  
All the men she can get, and she  
steppin' out with a guy Iike Tea Cake,  
(Tea Cake) Fire,  
All right, that's good. All right, now.  
Get the next one, Ready?  
Hey, hey, hey, now, hey, now,  
Old Joe Starks  
must be turnin' over in his grave,  
Hey, Don't pay them no mind, now,

Get it right here in your shoulder,  
-,,,up with that Tea Biscuit,  
- Look along the sites, Cock it, Fire!  
Whoo!  
There's one thing that thrills me so  
I say, "Yes, please, honey"  
Don't you know  
that I don't think I'll ever get enough  
Evenin', Pearl,  
oh, it feels so good,  
so come on, give me that stuff  
You know I'm wild for what you got  
However it comes, honey, cold or hot  
Mrs, Mayor Starks  
and Tea Cake gone fishin',  
Fishin', huh?  
Miss Janie and Tea Cake  
gone to Orlando, to the picture show,  
Tea Cake walking  
Miss Janie home at nights,  
but don'twalk hissself home till the mornin',  
Tea Cake usin' our collection-plate money  
to buy gasoline with,  
Yeah, he just draggin' her  
out of the church,  
I'm worried about you,  
Don't be,  
Tea Cake is draggin' you 'round  
to places you ain't used to,  
Shootin', and fishin', and,,,  
- What's so bad about all that?  
-,,,picnics in the middle of the week,  
You act Iike it's against the Iaw, Phoebe,  
Janie,  
(giggling) Girl!  
He's helpin' you spend your money,  
Ain't he?  
He got you buyin' him clothes,  
and hats, and whatnots,  
What's wrong with that?  
You know how it is when  
a woman runs off with a younger man,  
Tea Cake ain't Iike that,  
With him, I'm gonna utilize myself all over,



He want me to be serious with him,  
He asked me to marry him,  
Janie!  
Don't worry, I said no,  
I ain't never gettin' married again,  
But I am gonna run off with him,  
You gonna end up Iike Annie Taller,  
- No, I ain't,  
Remember how we all sat on our porches,  
watchin' her? Remember?  
After she was a widow? When she ran off  
with her no-count good-time fellow,  
she was laughing and sure, just Iike you,  
That young fellow  
gettin' ready to snatch all of her money,  
(laughs)  
(Phoebe) But he was only after  
what he could get,  
Stole her car, Stole her money,  
After that, he was gone,  
like a turkey through the corn,  
Well, I Iove T ea Cake,  
He gonna make a fool out of you,  
I want to Ieave a hour early  
to get everything ready,  
Don't you go missin' that bus or nothin',  
and Ieave me all high and dry, you hear?  
I won't,  
You wouldn't go makin'  
no false pretense with me, would you?  
Can't nobody hold a candle to you, Janie,  
You got the keys to the kingdom, girl,  
- Mrs, Mayor Starks?  
- Take care of things, won't you, Hezekiah?  
Yes, ma'am,  
- Where's she off to, you think?  
- Question ain't where to, it's who with,  
Well, you gotta hand it to her,  
she sure Iook good,  
T'ain't right,  
She gonna be back here  
before you know it, You mark my words,  
( band plays "Simply Beautiful")  
(drunken talking and laughter)

(man) If I gave you my Iove  
Baby  
I tell you what I would do  
I'd expect a whole Iot of Iove  
Out of you  
You got to be good to me  
I'm gonna be good to you  
There's a whole Iotta things  
You and I could do  
What about the way you Iove me  
And the way you squeeze me  
Simply beautiful  
Yeah, yeah, beautiful, yeah  
When you get right down to it  
When you need me, I was right there  
Beside you, girl, oh, beside you, girl  
Beside you  
Baby  
Baby, baby  
Yeah, yeah  
oh, yeah  
Little girl, sometimes  
The way you feelin'  
Honey, all you got to do  
Is call me  
Simply beautiful  
Simply beautiful  
Simply beautiful  
Tea Cake?  
Where you at, honey?  
Tea Cake?  
What you want, honey?  
You want some breakfast?  
No, I'm fine, Miss,  
(car horn)  
What about the way you love me  
And the way you squeeze me  
Simply beautiful to me  
Beautiful, simply  
(woman) That young fellow  
gettin' ready to snatch all her money,  
What about the way you hold me  
And the way you squeeze me  
Simply beautiful

Where the hell you been?  
It's good to see you too, baby,  
Good to see me, huh?  
Where the hell is my money?  
I Iost it,  
You Iost it? You Iost it?  
- What do you mean, you Iost it?  
- Listen!  
- You ain't gonna make no fool outta me,,,  
- You know I got a way with cards,  
Y'all walk out with a few hundred  
and walk back in with a few grand,  
You Iyin'!  
I was gonna take you to Orlando  
and buy you Iots of pretty stuff,  
- You Iost my money,  
- I musta been nervous, 'cause I couldn't,,,  
Couldn't win a hand, Janie!  
You stole my money,  
and you gambled it away,  
Yeah,  
My car, too,  
Well, you a damn fool,  
And I ain't never gonna give you a chance  
to make no fool out of me,  
Never gonna Iet you Ieave me  
in no dirty hotel room,  
I made up my mind never,,, never to  
Iet you see no commonness in me,  
You're hurt, What happened to you?  
- I was gonna,,,  
- Why, you hurt,,,  
-,,,go out and win the world for you,  
- You hurt yourself?  
- What happened to you?  
- So you can Iive with pretty things,  
I don't want to drag you down,  
I don't want to drag you down  
in no kind of way,  
No kind of way,  
You can't drag me down,  
AII you got to give me is yourself,  
That's it,  
Simply beautiful

Want to go to the muck?  
To the muck?  
What's the muck?  
It's this place down in the Everglades,  
Oh, it's beautiful and wild,  
There's plenty of work and fun,  
We,,, we could make us some money  
and have a hell of a time,  
- Now what you say to that?  
- No, we don't need no money,  
'Cause I got plenty of money in the bank,  
- We get us a new car,,,  
- No, no, no, no,  
See, your money gonna stay there,  
It's gonna stay in the bank,  
While we's together, we eat whatever  
my money can buy, and wear the same,  
Now, if I ain't got nothing,  
you don't got nothing,  
Well, that's all right with me,  
Yeah, that's Lake Okeechobee,  
An awful bigwater.  
Yes, ma'am, That's a whole heap of water,  
(Janie) I felt like I had been  
looking for this place my whole life,  
They came every spring,  
truckloads of 'em,  
From the east, west, north and south,  
Wild people,  
hopin ' to change their fortunes  
with the pickin ' season on the muck,  
Drums, Livin ' three lifetimes in one,  
Blues, made and used  
right there on the spot,  
(harmonica playing)  
(children singing nursery rhyme)  
(man) You watchin'?  
(native Americans talking)  
- What's your name?  
- Janie, What's yours?  
Nunkie,  
Oh, good,  
Sure Iook nice in them overalls,  
Now, you sure

you want to pick these cucumbers?

- Do I want to pick cucumbers?

- Mm-hm,

Yeah, I want to pick cucumbers!

You miss me when you at work,

- and I miss you when I'm at home,

- It's hard work, though,

I think I can handle it!

The lunch, the lunch,,,

Yeah, yeah, get that, I'm hungry,

(Janie) I felt for the very first time

like I was livin' my life,

I had love, and it was real,

Tea Cake gave me

the whole world every day,

(native Americans talking)

- Now, where y'all goin'?

- (man) To high ground,

Sawgrass bloomed, Hurricane's coming,

- Oh, they all just scared,

- Oh, I been in the glades for years,

There ain't nothin' comin' but a little blow,

Indians is leavin'

'cause they say a storm comin',

Well, if the Indians knew anything,

they'd still own this land, wouldn't they?

- (woman) Come on, now, We gotta git,

- (man) If they don't come, they don't come,

Why don't you hold that fish up

and let the wind blow them scales off?

Like that?

- (man) Come on, y'all, hurry up,

- (woman) Step up,

How about after the harvest

we go and take a look around Chicago?

- Sounds good,

- Mm-hm,

They crossin' the road in broad daylight,

Hey, the crows done flew up,

They say that's a bad sign,

I'm gonna go up north a few miles,

be on the safe side,

- It ain't nothing but a little windy,

- They say this one gonna be bad,

I got some space in here  
if y'all two want to come,  
We go, we gonna lose  
a two whole days' pay,  
- Go ahead, We gonna wait it out,  
- All right, now, Suit yourself,  
(thunder)  
Don't worry, If it do rain,  
we gonna be safer in the house anyway,  
(thunder)  
- What you doin', Janie?  
- I'm watchin' God,  
(thunder crashes)  
- It's gonna be all right,  
- I know,  
(crash)  
I reckon you wish  
you'd never left the big house  
and steered clear  
of these storms and such,  
No, this ain't nothing,  
- Hmm,  
- It ain't,  
Just with my man  
in the middle of a storm, that's all,  
Supposin' we was to die now,  
Well, it don't matter, 'Cause folks  
It's like if you can see the light of day,  
you really don't care if you die before dusk,  
Mmm,  
I was fumblin' around in the dark,  
God opened the door, and there you was,  
I never knew you were  
so satisfied with me like that,  
(rumbling and creaking)  
Tea Cake!  
Tea Cake!  
Tea Cake!  
Tea Cake!  
(dog barking)  
Tea Cake!  
(Tea Cake yells)  
Tea Cake?  
Tea Cake!

Tea Cake!

Tea Cake! Tea Cake!

Tea Cake, Tea Cake, come on, Come on,

He woulda torn me to pieces

if it wasn't for you,

Come here,

You don't have to say "if it wasn't for me,"

baby, 'cause I'm here,

Simply beautiful

(Janie) A week later, the water

had gone back between its banks,

leavin' the lake as calm and as peaceful

as it was the first time I'd seen it,

Folks came back and pitched in,

tryin' to make things right again,

All the while, Tea Cake rested,

Said he was tired, was all,

Brought you a whole bucketful of water,

- What's wrong?

- Water got somethin' wrong with it,

- Ain't nothing wrong with the water,

- Why didn't you clean it? You careless!

(retching)

(retching continues)

(groaning)

(man) Oh, there's nothing wrong with you,

Just a couple of little bites, You'll be fine,

Just keep Janie out your bed for a while,

Make sure he takes that medicine, and

- I wish I'd got to him sooner,

- I'll make sure he,,,

Gotta get him to the hospital,

They can tie him down and look after him,

- Tie him down?

- It sounds like the dog gave him rabies,

- I got money, so whatever it costs,,,

- He's sick now, he's liable to die,

No, you don't know Tea Cake,

He's just sick,,,

Shots right afterwards woulda fixed him up,

but he's liable to bite,

- He won't bite, just tell me what to do,

- Specially you, You'll be in the same fix,

Janie, it might be too late,

but I'll go to Palm Beach and I'll get him  
the medicine he shoulda had a week ago,  
It's gonna take me a day or so,  
That's the best I can do,  
- OK,  
- All right,  
We gonna get you well,  
Good,  
Good, 'cause you and me got things to do,  
We sure do,  
Since that first time I seen you,,,  
workin' in your store,  
I been,,,  
I been tryin',,,,  
I been tryin',,,,  
I,,, I been tryin'  
to put my finger on what it is,,,  
what it is about you,  
I'm just some old gal  
wouldn't nobody want but you, That's it,  
No,  
No, No,  
You only sound old  
when you tell people when you was born,  
It's like you,,, It's like you,,,  
you spent all your old days first  
with somebody else,  
and you saved up all your younger days  
to spend with me, you hear me?  
Oh, Janie, You're the kinda woman'd  
Forget to die,  
Come here,  
I'm here,  
You really need to hush up  
all this sweet talk,  
Just get better,  
Every time I see a patch of roses,  
all disportin' theyselves,  
makin' out like they're pretty,  
I say to 'em, "You ain't seen my Janie,"  
You keep sayin' stuff like that,  
I just might have to believe you,  
(choking)  
- What's the matter?



- Somethin',,, Somethin' got after me,  
You sure was strainin' with it,  
- This pillow's soppin' wet,  
- Tryin' to choke me to death,  
Here's money for gas, Get Doc Gordon,  
and tell him to come fast,  
Go as fast as you can,  
What you doin'?  
Doc Gordon said you need your rest,  
Janie,  
How about we have us some Iemonade?  
How come  
you won't sleep with me no more?  
I'll sleep with you, Come on, Iie down,  
I'll sleep with you,  
See?  
Doc Gordon gonna be here,  
Everything gonna be OK,  
(car horn)  
That's Doc Gordon,  
- Where you been?  
- No place,  
You's gonna run off with Motor Boat,  
ain't you? You tired of waitin' on me,  
Doin' for me, You gonna find yourself  
someone else, ain't you?  
Huh?  
- Don't Iie to me!  
- (click)  
It's just the sickness, That's all it is,  
It's just the sickness,  
It's got ahold of your mind,  
You just can't think straight, that's all,  
It's just the sickness, just the sickness,  
It's just makin' you think crazy things,,,  
It's not me, I seen you with him!  
(click)  
Fight it, Fight,  
I know you can fight it,  
(click)  
'Cause if you don't fight it,  
they gonna tie you down,  
And I ain'tgonna letnobodytieyou down.  
Now put that gun down,

Can you see me? Tea Cake?  
You see me? You see me, don't you?  
Can you see me?  
Can you see me?  
Can you see me?  
It's Janie,  
I know you love me,  
(two gunshots)  
(Janie wailing)  
Poor Tea Cake,  
Bless his heart,  
Tea Cake gonna always be alive,  
As long as I'm thinkin', and breathin'.  
And feelin'.  
Ain't nobody  
gonna criticize you in my hearin',  
- Good,  
- All right,  
I just,,,  
I feel like I grew ten feet high  
just listenin' to you,  
Girl, all I did  
was find out about livin' for myself,  
I'm gonna get my Sam to take me fishin',  
Right now, And I don't care how late it is,  
You go on, Go on, Phoebe,  
(Janie) Now, love is like the sea,  
It's a movin' thing,  
And it's different on every shore,  
(laughs)  
(Tea Cake) What you doin', Janie?  
I'm watching God,