CHARACTERS

Daisy Werthan  
Boolie, her son  
Florine, his wife  
Hoke Colburn, chauffeur  
Beulah, friend  
Nonie, friend  
Miriam, friend

Miss McClatchey, secretary  
Oscar, porter  
Idella, housekeeper  
Katie Bell, cook  
State Trooper  
Second Trooper  
Produce Man

PART 1

DAISY'S KITCHEN, August 1948. Daisy, who is seventy-two and energetic, enters. Idella, who is Daisy's age, is polishing silver.

Daisy. I'm gone to the market, Idella.

Idella. Mmmmm.

BACK YARD. Daisy is backing her car out of the garage. It suddenly shoots backward and stops, hanging over the edge of the neighbor's stone wall. Daisy gets out and slams the door, and the car drops into the neighbor's garden.

KITCHEN, later. Idella and Boolie are eating fried chicken.

Boolie. Mama!

Daisy (off camera). No!

Boolie. Mama!

Daisy (off camera). No!

Boolie. It's a miracle you're not laying in Emory Hospital—or decked out at the funeral parlor.

(Boolie goes into the pantry, where Daisy is transferring pickles from a large crock into jars.)

Daisy. The cucumbers are pretty this summer.
Boolie. Look at you! You didn’t even break your glasses.

Daisy. It was the car’s fault.

Boolie. Mama, you had the car in the wrong gear.

Daisy. I did not. (calls to Idella) Idella, you want a pickle with your lunch?

Idella (off camera). Not me.

Daisy. Well, I’m putting up a jar for you to take home to William, you hear?

Idella (off camera). Yassum. Thank you. He love your pickles.

Daisy. That’s because he has more sense than you do.

Boolie. You backed the car right into the Pollocks’ yard!

Daisy. You should have let me keep my LaSalle. It never would have behaved this way.

Boolie. Mama, cars don’t behave. They are behaved upon. The fact is that you, all by yourself, demolished that Packard.¹

Daisy. Think what you want. I know the truth.

Boolie. The truth is you just cost the insurance company twenty-seven hundred dollars. You are a terrible risk. Nobody is going to issue you a policy after this.

Daisy. You’re just saying that to be hateful.

Boolie. OK. Yes. I’m making it all up. Every insurance company in America is lined up out there in the driveway, falling all over themselves to get you to sign up.

Daisy. If you’re going to stand in my pantry and lie like a rug, well, I think it’s time for you to go somewhere else.

Boolie. OK. I’d better get back to the office. Florine’ll have a fit if I don’t come home on time tonight.

Daisy. Y’all must have plans tonight.

Boolie. Going to the Ansleys for a dinner party.

Daisy. I see.

Boolie. You see what?

Daisy. This is her idea of heaven on earth, isn’t it?

Boolie. What?

Daisy. Socializing with Episcopalians.

Boolie. You’re a doodle, Mama. I’ll stop by tomorrow evening.

Daisy. How do you know I’ll be here? I’m certainly not dependent on you for company.

Boolie. Fine. I’ll call first. But you know that we have got some real serious talking to do.

Daisy. No.

Boolie. Mama! (Daisy starts singing and goes upstairs.)

HALLWAY, next day. Daisy is on the phone.

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Daisy. Well, I need you now! I have to be at the beauty shop in half an hour! ... No, I most certainly did not know you had to call a minimum of two hours ahead. I don't know why you call yourselves a taxi company if you can't provide taxi-cabs! (She hangs up. Idella is nearby, dusting rag in hand.)

Idella. You call your son at the mill, he send somebody to carry you.

Daisy. That won't be necessary. I'll fix my own hair.

Idella. Sometimes I think you ain't got the sense God gave a lemon! (Daisy glares at her; Idella returns the glare.)

LIVING ROOM. Daisy and three friends are finishing a game of mah-jongg.

Beulah. Well, it's not my day for mah-jongg. That's easy to see.

Daisy. I have to thank y'all for coming here again. I'm a real pariah without my car.

Nonie. When are you getting your new one?

Daisy. I don't know. Boolie's being real pokey.

Miriam. Don't worry, sugar. I'll come after you for temple tomorrow. (Idella enters with dishes of ice cream.)

Beulah. Oh, it's your peach, Daisy. That's my favorite.

Daisy. Well then, try not to get your cigarette dirt in it.

FRONT HALL, later. Boolie and Florine enter. He is wearing jeans and a plaid shirt. She is wearing a denim skirt and a plaid blouse.

Boolie (calling). Mama? You there?

Florine (calling). Hey, Mother Werthan! It's just us! (Daisy comes downstairs, a book in her hand.)

Daisy. Why didn't you call?

Florine. We can't stay.

Daisy (sizing up both of their outfits). So I gather.

Boolie. The Millers are giving a hayride for their anniversary.

Florine. I had these made. Doesn't your baby look cute?

Daisy. That's not exactly the word I'd pick.

Boolie (seeing her book). Oh, I've been meaning to read that!

Daisy. Well, I'm sorry. I can't lend it to you. It's due back at the library tomorrow.

Boolie. You want me to return it for you?

Daisy. No, thank you. I will go to the library on the streetcar.

Boolie. Mama! Quit being so stubborn! You know perfectly well that we are going to have to—(Florine puts a hand on his arm to hush him up.)

Daisy. Go on now. You don't want to keep the horses waiting. (Boolie looks exasperated.)

LIBRARY. Daisy leaves the library holding two slim books and her purse. Miss Jensen, the librarian, hurries outside, carrying a hefty book.

Miss Jensen. Miz Werthan! Miz Werthan! Just a minute!

Daisy. Miss Jensen! What in the world?

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2. pariah (pəˈri-ə): a person rejected by others; social outcast.
Miss Jensen. You forgot to ask for the Lincoln biography you reserved. I checked it out for you.

Daisy (eyeing the book dubiously). Well! Aren't you the sweet thing!

Miss Jensen. Why, you're just about my best customer! (She hands Daisy the book.)

Daisy. Thank you. (She heads off.)

PIGGY WIGGLY MARKET. Daisy's shopping cart contains her three books, her purse, a bar of soap, one lamb chop, and a can of peas.

Produce Man. How many peaches for you today, Miz Werthan?

Daisy. Three, thank you.

Produce Man. You're not gonna be gettin' any better ones the rest of the summer. Lemme give you a few more.

Daisy. Just the three.

Produce Man. How about a nice watermelon? (Daisy shakes her head no and walks to the checkout counter.)

DAISY'S DRIVEWAY. Daisy lugs her parcels slowly up the driveway.

BOOLIE'S OFFICE. Boolie's on the phone.

Boolie. Well, I. W., you know as well as I do that Werthan Bag and Cotton isn't the only textile mill in Atlanta. If you want to get other bids... Oh, you did... That's what Ideal bid, huh?... Okay. You ever do business with Ideal before? (Miss McClatchey appears at the door. He raises his hand, telling her to wait.)

Miss McClatchey. It's important, Mr. Werthan.

Boolie (on the phone). Can you have lunch with me tomorrow?... Herrens all right?... Yes. Twelve-thirty. Love to Peggy and the children. (He hangs up. To Miss McClatchey.) What's wrong?

Photographs from the Zanuck production of Driving Miss Daisy, starring Jessica Tandy, Morgan Freeman, and Dan Aykroyd, Warner Brothers, 1989.

Words to Know and Use

dubiously (dö' bë as lë) adv. in a doubtful way; skeptically
Miss McClatchey. Oscar's stuck in the freight elevator.

FREIGHT ELEVATOR. The elevator is well above floor level, revealing only a pair of legs up to the knees. Boolie arrives.

Boolie. Oscar?
Oscar (from inside the elevator). Yassuh. Here I am.
Boolie. You all right?
Oscar. Nawsuh. I'm stuck.
Boolie. I know. Fiddle with the lever.
Oscar. It all fiddled out. I done everythin' I know how.
Boolie (angry). Call Bell Elevator, Miss McClatchey.

Miss McClatchey. I already did. They're backed up. But they'll be here around one.
Boolie. One! Did you tell them it's an emergency?

Miss McClatchey. You don't have to holler at me, Mr. Werthan. I didn't break the elevator. (A crowd of workers has gathered.)
Boolie. You got that stuff for Davison Paxon in there, Oscar?
Oscar. Wrapped and ready to go.
Boolie. I told them they'd have it yesterday. Call Bell back! (Miss McClatchey goes off. We hear a voice from the crowd.)
Hoke. Oscar! (Boolie turns and sees Hoke, who is about sixty.) You hear me, Oscar?
Oscar. I hear you.
Hoke. Is there a little doohickey up yonder where the gate suppose to close? Stickin' down a little?

Oscar. Wait a minute. Yeah. It right here.
Hoke. Well, reach up and mash on it. Mash it up till it catch.
Oscar. I done it. Now what?
Hoke. Well, just work the lever. (The elevator comes down, and Oscar comes into view. The workers applaud.)

Boolie (to Hoke). Excuse me, do you work here?
Oscar. Nawsuh, this Hoke.
Hoke. Pleased to see you, suh.
Boolie. Oh. Well, thank you. How did you know about the elevator?
Hoke. I used to drive for the Avondale Dairy, and they have a sorry old elevator worse then disheah.
Oscar. Don't you remember? Hoke the one I told you about.
Boolie. Oh, of course. (He heads back to his office, and Hoke follows.)
Hoke. Mist' Werthan. Y'all people Jewish, ain't you?
Boolie. Yes, we are. Why do you ask?
Hoke. Well, suh, I'd druther work for Jews. People always talkin' 'bout they stingy and they cheap, but don't say none of that 'round me.

Boolie. Good to know you feel that way.
Hoke. Yassuh. One time I workin' for this woman over near Little Five Points. What was that woman's name? I forget. Anyway, one day, she have all these old shirts and collars be on the bed, and she say, "They b'long to my daddy, and we fixin' to sell 'em to you for twenty-five cents apiece." (pause) Any fool can see the whole bunch together ain't worth a nickel.
Anyway, them the people callin’ Jews cheap. So I say, “Yassum, I think about it,” and I get me another job as fast as I can. So then I go to work for Judge Harold Stone, another Jewish gentleman jes’ like you.

Boolie. You drove for Judge Stone?

Hoke. Seven years to the day, nearabout. An’ I be there still if he din’ up and die. Miz Stone say, “Move on down to Savannah with me, Hoke,” ‘cause my wife dead by then, but I say, “No, thank you.” I din’ want to leave my granbabies.

Boolie. Judge Stone was a friend of my father’s.

Hoke. You doan’ mean! Oscar say you need a driver for yo’ family. What I be doin’? Runnin’ yo’ children to school and yo’ wife to the beauty parlor and like that?

Boolie. I don’t have any children, but tell me—

Hoke. Thass a shame. My daughter bes’ thing ever happen to me. But you a young man yet. I wouldn’t worry none.

Boolie. I won’t. Thank you. Hoke, what I’m looking for is somebody to drive my mother around.

Hoke. Excuse me for askin’, suh, but how come she ain’ hiring for herself?

Boolie. Well, it’s a difficult situation.

Hoke. Mmmm hmmm. She done gone ‘round the bend a little? That’ll happen when they get on.

Boolie. Oh, no. She’s all there. Too much there is the problem. It just isn’t safe for her to drive anymore. She knows it, but she won’t admit it.

Hoke. Cahilll! That woman in Little Five Points name Miz Frances Cahill! I leave her and go right to Judge Stone, and he the reason I happy to hear y’all Jews.

Boolie. Hoke, I want you to understand—my mother is a little high-strung. But the fact is you’d be working for me. She can say anything she likes, but she can’t fire you. You understand?

Hoke. Doan’ you worry none about it. I hold on no matter what way she run me. When I nothin’ but a little boy down there on the farm above Macon where I come from, I used to wrestle hogs to the ground at killin’ time. And ain’ no hog got away from me yet.

Boolie. How does twenty dollars a week sound?

Hoke. Soun’ like you done hire yo’ mama a chauffeur.

Boolie smiles with relief.

DAISY’S FRONT HALL. Idella is using a carpet sweeper. Boolie and Hoke enter.

Boolie. How are you, Idella?

Idella. Livin’.

Boolie. Where’s that vacuum cleaner I brought over here?

Idella. In the closet.

Boolie (to Hoke). She won’t touch it.

Idella. I would if it didn’ give me a shock every time I go near it.

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3. gone ‘round the bend: a phrase suggesting that someone has lost mental alertness or become senile.
Boolie. It works for me.

Idella. Good. You clean up. I go down and run yo' office. (Hoke laughs. Idella shoots him a look.)

Boolie. Where's Mama?

Idella. Up yonder.

Boolie. I guess you know who this is.

Idella. Mmmm hmmm.

Boolie. I'll be right back, Hoke. (He heads upstairs.)

Idella (to Hoke). I wouldn't be in your shoes if the Sweet Lawd Jesus come down and ask me hisself!

DAISY'S BEDROOM. Daisy is at a desk, paying bills. Boolie enters.

Boolie. Good morning, Mama. (She ignores him.) All I'm asking is for you to come and say hello.

Daisy. Now you listen here. Unless they rewrote the Constitution and didn't tell me, I still have rights.

Boolie. Well, of course, Mama, but—

Daisy. What I do not want—and absolutely will not have—is some chauffeur sitting in my kitchen, gobbling up my food, running up my phone bill. Oh, I hate all that in my house.

Boolie. You have Idella.

Daisy. Idella is different. She's been coming to me since you were in the eighth grade, and we know how to stay out of each other's way. And even so, there are nicks and chips in my wedding china.

Boolie. Do you think Idella has a vendetta\(^\text{4}\) against your wedding china?

Daisy. Stop being sassy. I was brought up to do for myself. On Forsythe Street we couldn't afford them. That's still the best way if you ask me!


Daisy. Why, Boolie! What a thing to say! I'm not prejudiced! Aren't you ashamed?

Boolie. I got to get back to the mill. You might as well try to make the best of this, Mama. (He leaves.)

KITCHEN. Idella is rolling out biscuit dough. Hoke is sitting nearby.

Hoke. I knew a Miss Idella once, down there in Macon.

Idella. Doan' say.

Hoke. You talkin' about sing! I mean that woman had lungs! She'd a been a whole church choir by herself if they'd a let her. And fat, too! She about the size of that stove yonder. (Idella laughs. Daisy enters.)

Daisy. Don't talk to Idella. She's got work to do.

Hoke. Yassum.

GARDEN. Hoke, a trowel in hand, is kneeling by a bed of flowers. Daisy appears at a window. Hoke looks up.

Hoke. Looks like yo' zinnias could use a little tendin' to.

Daisy. You leave my flower bed alone.

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4. vendetta: a bitter quarrel; effort to take revenge.
Hoke. Yassum. You know, Miz Daisy, you got a nice place back beyond the garage ain’t doin’ nothin’ but sittin’ there. I could put you some butter beans and some Irish potatoes—

Daisy. If I want a vegetable garden, I’ll plant it for myself.

Hoke. Well, anything else I kin do for you?

Daisy. Go back where you belong. (She closes the window.)

HALLWAY. Hoke is studying the pictures on the wall. Daisy appears.

Daisy. What are you doing there?

Hoke. I love a house with pictures. Make a home. Disheah you, ain’t it?

Daisy. Yes.

Hoke. Look like you been a teacher or something.

Daisy. I don’t like you nosing through my things. (She leaves.)

GARAGE. Hoke gets into the new car. Daisy enters the garage.

Daisy. What are you doing?

Hoke. Fixin’ to back de car out.

Daisy. Why? I’m not going anywhere.

Hoke. I know that, but I brung disheah from home. (He pulls a cloth from his coat.) Give the car a good wipe off.

Daisy. What for? It’s never been out of the garage.

Hoke. You tellin’ me!

Daisy. I don’t want you touching my car. You understand? (He reluctantly gets out of the car.)

Hoke. Yassum. I reckon I jes’ set in the kitchen till five o’clock.

Daisy. That’s your affair. (Hoke goes toward the back door. Then Daisy attacks, her flower bed.)

SCREEN PORCH. Daisy is reading the morning paper. Hoke enters.


Daisy. Good morning.

Hoke. Right cool in the night, wasn’t it?

Daisy. I wouldn’t know. I was asleep.

Hoke. Idella says we runnin’ outta coffee and Dutch Cleanser.

Daisy. We are?

Idella is in the living room, working.

Idella. Yassum, and we low on silver polish, too.

Daisy. I know . . . and I’m fixin’ to go to the Piggly Wiggly on the trolley. (She gets up and walks toward the front hall.)

Hoke. Now, Miz Daisy, how come you doan’ let me drive you?

Daisy. No, thank you.

FRONT HALL. Daisy puts on her hat and gathers her gloves and purse.

Hoke. Ain’ that what Mist’ Werthan done hire me for?

Daisy. That’s his problem.

Hoke. All right den. I find somethin’ to do.

Daisy. You leave my things alone! (She marches outside; Hoke follows.)

Hoke. You know, that Oldsmobile ain’t moved an inch from where Mist’ Werthan rode it over here from Century Motors.
Seem like that insurance company done give you a whole new car for nothin'.

Daisy. That's your opinion.

Hoke. Yassum. And my other opinion is a fine rich Jewish lady like you doan' b'long draggin' up the steps of no bus luggin' no grocery bags. I come along and carry them fo' you.

Daisy. I don't need you. I don't want you. And I don't like you saying I'm rich.

Hoke. I won' say it no more then.

Daisy. Is that what you and Idella talk about in the kitchen? I hate being discussed behind my back in my own house! I was born on Forsythe Street, and, believe you me, I know the value of a penny. My brother Manny brought home a white cat one day, and Papa said we couldn't keep it because we couldn't afford to feed it. My sisters saved up money so I could go to school and be a teacher. We didn't have anything!

Hoke. Yassum, but look like you doin' all right now. (Daisy glares at him, and he retreats to the house.)

STREET. Daisy is walking along the sidewalk. She notices that Hoke is driving slowly behind her.

Daisy (horrified). What are you doing?

Hoke. Tryin' to take you to the sto'. (A neighbor, who is gardening in her front yard, looks surprised at this unusual spectacle.)

Daisy (to Hoke). Go away! I've ridden the trolley with groceries plenty of times.

Hoke. Yassum, but I feel bad takin' Mist' Werthan's money for doin' nothin'.

Daisy. How much does he pay you?

Hoke. That between him and me, Miz Daisy.

Daisy. Anything over seven dollars a week is robbery. Highway robbery.

Hoke. Specially when I doan' do nothin' but sit on a stool in the kitchen all day long. (Daisy notices another neighbor watching her through a window.)

Daisy. All right, the Piggly Wiggly. And then home. Nowhere else.

Hoke. Yassum. (He stops the car and hops out, but she quickly gets in before he can help her. Hoke gets back in.)

Daisy. Wait. You don't know how to run this car.

Hoke. Ain' you jes' seen me do it? Anyway, disheah automatic. Any fool can run it.

Daisy. Any fool but me, apparently.

Hoke. Ain' no need to be so hard on yoseff now. You cain' drive, but you probably do alotta things I cain' do. It all work out.

Daisy. The idea! (Hoke starts driving.)

Hoke. I love the smell of a new car. Doan' you, Miz Daisy? (no answer)

Daisy. I'm nobody's fool, Hoke.

Hoke. Nome.

Daisy. I can see that speedometer as well as you can.

Hoke. I see dat.

Daisy. My husband taught me how to run a car.

Hoke. Yassum.

Daisy. So don't think for even a minute that you can—wait! You're speeding! I see it!
Hoke. We ain' goin' but nineteen miles an hour.
Daisy. I like to go under the speed limit.
Hoke. Yassum, but the speed limit thirty-five here.
Daisy. The slower you go, the more you save on gas.
Hoke. We barely moving. Might as well walk to the Piggly Wiggly.
Daisy. Is this your car?
Hoke. Nome.
Daisy. Do you pay for the gas?
Hoke. Nome.
Daisy. All right then. My son may think I'm losing my abilities, but I am still in control of what goes on in my car. Where are you going?
Hoke. To the grocery sto'.
Daisy. Then why didn't you turn on Highland Avenue?
Hoke. Piggly Wiggly ain't on Highland Avenue. It on Euclid.
Daisy. I know where it is, and I want to go to it the way I always go. On Highland Avenue.
Hoke. That three blocks out of the way, Miz Daisy.
Daisy. Go back! Go back this minute!
Hoke. We in the wrong lane. I cain' jes'—
Daisy. If you don't go back, I'll get out of this car and walk.
Hoke. We movin'! You cain' open the do'!
Daisy. This is wrong. Where are you taking me?
Hoke. The sto'.
Daisy. This is wrong. You have to go back to Highland Avenue.
Daisy. I have been driving to the Piggly Wiggly since they put it up and opened it for business! This isn't the way! Go back! Go back this minute!
Hoke. Yonder the Piggly Wiggly, Miz Daisy.
Daisy. Get ready to turn.
Hoke. Yassum.
Daisy. Look out! There's a little boy behind that shopping cart!
Hoke. I see dat.
Daisy. Pull in next to the blue car.
Hoke. We closer to the do' right here.
Daisy. I don't park in the sun! It fades the upholstery.
Hoke. Yassum. (He parks the car as directed. Daisy quickly gets out, heads for the store, then stops.)
Daisy. Wait a minute. Give me the keys.
Hoke. Yassum.
Daisy. Stay right here by the car. And you don't have to tell everybody my business.
Hoke. Nome. Don't forget the Dutch Cleanser now. (She glares at him and enters the store. Hoke goes to a pay phone and dials a number.)
Hoke. Hello? Miz McClatchey? Hoke Colburn here. Can I speak to him? . . . Mornin', Mist' Werthan. Guess where I'm at. . . . I jes' drove yo' mama to the sto'. . . . Oh, she flap around a little on the way. But she all right. She in the sto'. (He sees Daisy in the store through the front window. She suddenly sees him.)
Uh oh. She done see me on the phone. She liable to throw a fit right there by the checkout. . . . Yassuh. Only took me six days. Same time it take the Lawd to make the world.

**DAISY'S HOUSE, autumn.** A Werthan Company truck is parked outside.

**LIVING ROOM.** Oscar and his assistant, Junior, are removing slipcovers and rolling up rugs. Hoke, jacket off, is helping them.

**Oscar.** How the old lady been treating you, Hoke?

**Hoke.** She know how to pitch a fit. I tell you that. (Oscar and Junior laugh. Daisy enters, wearing a fur piece, a hat, and gloves.)

**Daisy.** What's so funny?

**Hoke.** Nothin', Miz Daisy. We jes' carryin' on.

**Daisy.** Oscar and Junior have been doing my fall cleaning for fifteen years, and they never carried on before. Leave them alone.

**Hoke.** Yassum.

**Daisy.** And put your coat on. We're late.

**Hoke.** I be right there.

**Daisy (off camera).** Idella! I'm gone to temple!

**Hoke (as he leaves).** And I right behind her, Idella.

**THE TEMPLE.** The service is over, and people are leaving. Daisy, who is with friends, sees Hoke standing beside her car, which is
parked right in front of the temple. Two other chauffeur-driven sedans are behind it. She hurries to the car and gets in by herself.

Daisy. I can get myself in... Just go. Hurry up out of here!

Hoke. Yassum. (Bewildered, he gets in the car and starts driving.)

Daisy. I didn’t say speed. I said get me away from here.

Hoke. Somethin’ wrong back yonder?

Daisy. No.

Hoke. Somethin’ I done?

Daisy. No. (a beat) Yes.

Hoke. I ain’ done nothin’!

Daisy. You had the car parked right in front of the temple! Like I was the queen of Romania! Everybody saw you! Didn’t I tell you to wait for me in the back?

Hoke. I jes’ tryin’ to be nice. They two other chauffeurs right behind me.

Daisy. You made me look like a fool.

Hoke. You ain’ no fool, Miz Daisy.

Daisy. Slow down. Miriam and Beulah and them, I could see what they were thinking.

Hoke. What that?

Daisy. That I’m trying to pretend I’m rich.

Hoke. You is rich, Miz Daisy!

Daisy. No, I’m not. And nobody can ever say I put on airs. On Forsythe Street we made many a meal off of grits5 and gravy. I did without plenty of times, I can tell you.

Hoke. And now you doin’ with. What so terrible in that?

Daisy. You! Why do I talk to you? You don’t understand me.

Hoke. Nome, I don’t. I truly don’t. ’Cause if I ever was to get ahold of what you got, I be shakin’ it around for everybody in the worl’ to see.

Daisy. That’s vulgar! Don’t talk to me! (Hoke mutters something under his breath.) What? What did you say? I heard that!

Hoke. Miz Daisy, you needs a chauffeur, and I needs a job. Let’s jes’ leave it at dat. (They eye each other warily in the rearview mirror.)

BOOLIE’S FRONT HALL, early morning, winter. The phone rings. Boolie answers it.

Boolie. Good morning, Mama. What’s the matter?... No, I don’t always think something’s the matter when you call. It’s just that when you call so early in the morning. . . . What?... All right. I’ll be there as soon as I can. (He hangs up and enters the breakfast room.) I better go on over there.

Florine. It’s not healthy for you to rush like this in the morning.

Boolie. I eat too much anyway. And it sounds like she needs me.

Florine. When doesn’t it? (She smiles at him.) Give Mother Werthan my love. (He hurries out.)

DAISY’S KITCHEN. Daisy, in a warm bathrobe, is pacing. Boolie enters.

Boolie. I didn’t expect to find you in one piece.

Daisy. I wanted you to be here when he comes. I wanted you to hear it for yourself.

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5. grits: short for hominy grits, a Southern dish made of coarsely ground dry corn.
Boolie. Hear what? What is going on?

Daisy. He’s stealing from me.

Boolie. Hoke? Are you sure?

Daisy. I don’t make empty accusations. I have proof!

Boolie. What proof?

Daisy. This! (She pulls an empty can of salmon from her robe pocket.) I found this hidden in the garbage pail under some coffee grounds.

Boolie. You mean he stole a can of salmon?

Daisy. I knew something was funny. They all take things, you know. So I counted.

Boolie. You counted?

Daisy. The silverware first and then the linen napkins, and then I went into the pantry. The first thing that caught my eye was a hole behind the corned beef. And I knew right away. There were only eight cans of salmon. I had nine. Three for a dollar on sale.

Boolie. Very clever, Mama. You made me miss my breakfast and be late for a meeting at the bank for a thirty-three-cent can of salmon. (He pulls some bills from his pocket.) Here. You want thirty-three cents? Here’s a dollar! Here’s ten dollars! Buy a pantry full of salmon.

Daisy. Why, Boolie! The idea! Waving money at me like I don’t know what! I don’t want the money. I want my things.

Boolie. One can of salmon?

Daisy. Well, it was mine! I leave him plenty of food every day, and I always tell him exactly what it is. They want something, they just take it. He’ll never admit this. “Nome,” he’ll say. “I doan’ know nothin’ ‘bout that.” And I don’t like it! I don’t like living this way! I have no privacy!

Boolie. All right. I give up. You want to drive yourself again, you just go ahead and arrange it with the insurance company. Take your blessed trolley. Buy yourself a taxicab. Anything you want. Just leave me out of it.

Daisy. Hoke. . . (Hoke and Idella enter by the back door, and Idella goes off to the pantry.)

Hoke. Mornin’, Miz Daisy. I b’lieve it fixin’ to clear up. ‘Scuse me, Mist’ Werthan. Y’all busy?

Boolie. Hoke, I think we have to have a talk.

Hoke. All right. Jes’ lemme put my coat away. I be right back. (He pulls a small paper bag from his pocket.) Oh, Miz Daisy. Yestiddy when you out visitin’, I ate a can o’ your salmon. I know you say eat de leffover pork chops, but they stiff. Here, I done buy you another can. You want me to put it in the pantry?

Daisy. Yes, thank you, Hoke.

Hoke. I be right with you, Mist’ Werthan. (He goes off to the pantry.)

Daisy (trying for dignity). Well, I got to get dressed now. 'Bye, son. (She heads for the stairs.)

Cemetery, May 1951. Daisy is planting verbena beside a headstone that reads “Sigmund Werthan.” Hoke ambles over.

Hoke. I jes’ thinkin’, Miz Daisy. We bin out heah to the cemetery three times dis month already.

Daisy. It’s good to come in nice weather.
Hoke. Yassum. Mist' Sig's grave mighty well tended. I b'lieve you the best widow in the state of Georgia.

Daisy. Boolie's always pestering me to let the staff out here tend to this plot. Perpetual care they call it.

Hoke. Well, doan' do it. It right to have somebody from the family looking after you.

Daisy. I'll certainly never have that. Boolie will have me in perpetual care before I'm cold.

Hoke. Go on 'way from here!

Daisy. Hoke, put that pot of azaleas on Leo Bauer's grave.

Hoke. Miz Rose Bauer's husband?

Daisy. That's right. She asked me to bring it out here for her.

Hoke. Yassum. Where the grave at?

Daisy. I'm not exactly sure. But I know it's over that way. (points) You'll see the headstone. Bauer.

Hoke (vaguely). Yassum.

Daisy. What's the matter?

Hoke. Nothin' the matter. (He goes to the car, gets the azaleas, and comes back.) Miz Bauer . . .

Daisy. I told you, it's over there. It says Bauer on the headstone.

Hoke. Now, how do that look?

Daisy. What are you talking about?

Hoke. I'm talkin' 'bout I cain' read.

Daisy. What?

Hoke. I cain' read.

Daisy. That's ridiculous. Anybody can read.


Daisy. Then how come I see you looking at the paper all the time?

Hoke. Thass it. Jes' lookin'. I dope out what's happenin' from the pictures best I can.

Daisy. You know your letters, don't you?


Daisy. Stop saying that. It's making me mad. If you know your letters, you can read. You just don't know you can read. I taught some of the stupidest children God ever put on the face of the earth, and all of them could read enough to find a name on a tombstone. The name is Bauer. Buh buh buh buh buh Bauer. What does that buh letter sound like?

Hoke. Sound like a B.

Daisy. Of course. Buh Bauer. Er er er er. BauER. That's the last part. What letter sounds like er?

Hoke. An R?

Daisy. So the first letter is a . . .

Hoke. B.

Daisy. And the last letter is an . . .

Hoke. R.


Hoke. Thass it?
Daisy. That's it. Now go on over there and look for a headstone with a B at the beginning and an R at the end, and that will be Bauer.

Hoke. We ain' goin' worry 'bout what come in the middle?

Daisy. Not right now. This will be enough for you to find it. Go on now.

Hoke. Yassum.

Daisy. And don't come back here telling me you can't do it. Because you can. (Hoke carries the potted azaleas past a number of headstones. Then, there it is—BAUER. He silently mouths the Buh and the Er and places the azaleas gently by the headstone. Then he returns to Daisy.)

Hoke. Miz Daisy . . .

Daisy. Yes?

Hoke. I sure 'preciate this, Miz Daisy.

Daisy. Don't be ridiculous! I didn't do anything. Now, let's get all this back to the car. I'm burning up out here. (He gathers up her digging tools and takes her elbow as they walk to the car.)

Responding to Reading

First Impressions of Part 1

1. What are your impressions of Daisy and Hoke so far? Write your thoughts in your journal or notebook.

Second Thoughts on Part 1

2. How would you describe Daisy's attitude toward Hoke in the first part of the play?

3. What is your opinion of how Hoke handles Miss Daisy?
   Think about
   • Daisy's reactions to Hoke and the other characters
   • what Boolie expects from Hoke

4. Daisy often reacts to situations with anger and impatience. Why do you think she does this?

5. Why do you think Daisy and Hoke have different attitudes about Daisy's being rich?

Reading On

In the next section of the play, watch to see how Hoke and Daisy's relationship grows. Also take note of Boolie and Florine. What kind of people are they?
PART 2

BOOLIE’S DEN, Christmas morning, 1953.
Boolie is going through a pile of long-playing Christmas records, none of them particularly religious. Through the open door we see a huge Christmas tree.

Florine (off camera). Of course I told you! (We hear a muffled voice rising in protest.) Now, how can I be expected to buy it if you don’t write it down? (more of the muffled voice) Boolie! I need you!

Boolie. Be right there! (He enters the kitchen. Florine is staring at a large bowl full of sliced oranges and bananas.)

Florine (to the new cook). I told you. I told you a million times, Katie Bell. Write it down.

Katie Bell. Yassum.

Florine. More I cannot do. (to Boolie) We’re out of coconut.

Boolie (the peacemaker). I’m sure we can manage, Katie Bell.

Katie Bell. I tolle her.

Florine. But you didn’t write it down! I don’t need to stand around and listen to excuses on Christmas Day. Maybe you can figure out how to serve ambrosia to fifty people without coconut. I give up. (She leaves.)

Boolie (to Katie Bell). I’ll call Mama. She has the whole Piggly Wiggly in her pantry. (He goes to the phone and dials.) Mama? Merry Christmas. Listen, do Florine a favor, all right? ... You got a package of coconut in your pantry? ... Would you bring it when you come? ... Many thanks. See you anon,6 Mama. Ho ho ho! (He hangs up and bounds upstairs.) Honey! Hey, honey! (He enters the master bedroom.) Florine! Florine!

Florine (from her large closet). In here.

Boolie. Your ambrosia’s saved. Mama’s got the coconut!

Florine. I knew she was good for something.

Boolie. Florine! I told you I don’t like all this sniping at Mama. She’s an old lady for goodness’ sake! (Florine’s eyes flash, and she starts to speak, then changes her mind and kisses Boolie seductively.)

Florine. I think your mama woulda liked it if you’d married some little bookworm.


DAISY’S CAR, night, passing suburban houses with outdoor Christmas decorations. Hoke is driving. Daisy is not in a festive mood.

Hoke. Oooooh, look at them lit-up decorations!

Daisy. Everybody’s giving the Georgia Power Company a merry Christmas.

Hoke. Miz Florine’s got ‘em all beat with the lights. ’Specially now they got that new house.

Daisy. That silly Santa Claus winking on the front door!

6. anon: soon.

Words to Know and Use

sniping (snip’ in) n. attacking someone in a sly or deceitful way  snipe v.
Hoke. I bet she have the biggest tree in Atlanta. Where she get 'em so large?

Daisy. Absurd. If I had a nose like Florine's, I wouldn't go around saying "Merry Christmas" to anybody.

Hoke. I enjoy Christmas at they house.

Daisy. I don't wonder. You're the only Christian in the place.

Hoke. 'Cept they got that new cook.

Daisy. Florine never could keep help. Of course, it's none of my affair.

Hoke. Nome.

Daisy. Too much running around, if you ask me. The Garden Club this and the Junior League that! But she'd die before she'd fix a glass of iced tea for the Temple Sisterhood!

Hoke. Yassum. You right.

Daisy. I just hope she doesn't take it in her head to sing this year. (She imitates.) Glo-o-o-o-o-o-o-orial! She sounds as if she has a bone stuck in her throat.

Hoke. You done say a mouthful, Miz Daisy.

Daisy. You didn't have to come. Boolie would have run me out.

Hoke. I know dat.

Daisy. Then why did you?

Hoke. That my business. (Hoke turns the car into Boolie's driveway, passing a facsimile of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.) Well, looka there. Look what Miz Florine done.

Daisy. Oh, my Lord! If her grandfather, old man Freitag, could see this! What is it you say? I bet he'd jump up out of his grave and snatch her baldheaded. (Hoke gets out and goes to open the passenger door.)

Hoke. Go on 'way from here, Miz Daisy! Jump up and snatch her baldheaded!

Daisy. Wait a minute. (She takes a small package wrapped in brown paper from her purse.) This isn't a Christmas present.

Hoke. Nome.

Daisy. You know I don't give Christmas presents.

Hoke. Yassum.

Daisy. I just happened to run across it this morning. Go on. Open it. (He unwraps the present.)

Hoke. Ain' nobody never give me no book. (He reads, not without difficulty.) "Handwriting Copy Book—Grade Five."

Daisy. I always taught out of these.
Boolie. Did Mama tell you this new car has air conditioning?

Hoke. She say she doan’ like no air cool. Say it give her the neck ache. *(They walk toward a new 1955 Cadillac.)*

Boolie. You know how Mama fought me, but it’s time for a trade. I bet you will miss the old one, though.

Hoke. Not me. Unh unh.

Boolie. Oh, come on. Aren’t you a little sorry to see it go?

Hoke. It ain’ goin’ nowhere. I done bought it.

Boolie. You didn’t!

Hoke. Already made the deal with Mist’ Red Mitchell inside yonder.

Boolie. For how much?

Hoke. Dat for him and me to know.

Boolie. Why didn’t you just buy it from Mama? You’d have saved money.

Hoke. Yo’ mama in my business enough as it is. I ain’ studyin’ makin’ no monthly car payments to her. Disheah mine the regular way.

Boolie. It’s a good car, all right. I guess nobody knows that better than you.

Hoke. Bes’ ever come off the line. And dis new one, Miz Daisy doan’ take to it, I let her ride in disheah now an’ again.

Boolie. Mighty nice of you.

Hoke. Well, we all doin’ what we can.

Boolie. You want to drive the new one home?

Hoke. No, suh.

Boolie. Why not?
Hoke. 'Cause I doan’ want you gettin’ them nasty ashes all over my upholstery.

DAISY’S KITCHEN, June 1957. Idella, in her eighties and looking worn, is taking fried chicken out of a skillet. Daisy enters.

Daisy. That’s not enough chicken.

Idella. How much you an’ Hoke plannin’ to eat?

Daisy. I like to give them leftovers when I get there.

Idella. You will, ’less you make a pig of yos- off.

Daisy. Did you put mustard in those eggs?

Idella. I always put mustard in my stuffed eggs.

Daisy. Spicy things make me sick.

Idella. You go upstairs and see ‘bout your packing. (Daisy starts out, then stops.)

Daisy. Don’t put the peaches in the icebox. I hate cold peaches.

Idella. Yassum. (Daisy leaves.) Act like I ain’ never made a picnic in my life.

DAISY’S DRIVEWAY. Daisy drags a heavy suitcase out to the garage and returns to the house. Then she comes out with the picnic lunch and a wrapped gift. Hoke pulls up in his car and gets out.

Daisy (extremely irritated). It’s three after seven!

Hoke. Yassum. You say we leavin’ at fifteen to eight.

Daisy. At the latest, I said.

Hoke. Now what bizness you got, draggin’ disheah out de house by yoseff?

Daisy. Who was here to help me?

Hoke. Miz Daisy, it doan’ take me more ’an five minutes to load up de trunk of dis car.

Daisy. I hate doing things at the last minute.

Hoke. What you talkin’ ’bout? You ready to go for the las’ week and a half! (He picks up the present.)

Daisy. Don’t touch that.

Hoke. Ain’ it wrap pretty! Dat Mist’ Walter’s present?

Daisy. Yes. It’s fragile. I’ll hold it on the seat with me. (As Hoke loads the trunk, Boolie pulls up in his car and gets out.) Well, you nearly missed us.

Boolie. I thought you were leaving at quarter of.

Hoke. She takin’ on.

Daisy. Be still.

Boolie (holding out a gift). Florine sent this for Uncle Walter. (Daisy recoils from it.) Well, it’s not a snake, Mama. I think it’s note paper.

Daisy. How appropriate. Uncle Walter can’t see.

Boolie. Maybe it’s soap.

Daisy. How nice that you show such an interest in your uncle’s ninetieth birthday.

Boolie. Don’t start up, Mama. I cannot go to Mobile with you. I have to go to New York tonight for the convention.

Daisy. The convention starts Monday. And I know what else I know.

Words to Know and Use:

upholstery (up hōl’ ster è) n. the soft fabric covering furniture
recoil (ri kōl’) v. to draw back from something distasteful or painful
Boolie. Just leave Florine out of it. She wrote away for those tickets eight months ago.

Daisy. I'm sure My Fair Lady is more important than your own flesh and blood.

Boolie. Mama! I can't talk to you when you're like this. (Daisy gets into the car.)

Daisy. They expect us for a late supper in Mobile.

Boolie. You'll be there. (He takes Hoke out of Daisy's hearing.)

Daisy. Hush up. (The car moves down the driveway.)

COUNTRY ROADSIDE. Daisy and Hoke are eating lunch, relaxed.

Hoke. Idella stuff eggs good.

Daisy. You stuff yourself good. (They eat in peaceful silence.) I was thinking about the first time I ever went to Mobile. It was Walter's wedding, 1888.

Hoke. 1888! You weren't nothing but a little child!

Daisy. I was twelve. We went on the train. And I was so excited. I'd never been in a wedding party, and I'd never seen the ocean. Papa said it was the Gulf of

Daisy. It's seven-sixteen.

Boolie. You ought to have a job on the radio announcing the time.

Daisy. I want to miss the rush hour.

Boolie. Congratulate Uncle Walter for me. And kiss everybody in Mobile. (Hoke gets in the car and starts the engine.)

Daisy. Did you have the air condition checked? I told you to have the air condition checked.

Hoke. Yassum, I had the air condition checked, but I don't know what for. You doan' never allow me to turn it on.
Mexico and not the ocean. I asked Papa if it was all right to dip my hand in the water. He laughed because I was so timid. And then I tasted the salt water on my fingers. Isn’t it silly to remember that?

**Hoke.** No sillier than most of what folks remember. (*A state patrol car pulls up. Two troopers are in the front seat.*)

**Trooper** (to Hoke). Hey, boy! (Hoke looks at him evenly.) What do you think you’re doing with this car?

**Daisy** (*calm, but angry*). This is my car, officer.

**Trooper** (*gets out and walks over*). Yes, ma’am. Can I see the registration, please? (to Hoke) And your license, boy. (Hoke produces the registration and the license. The trooper studies both. To Daisy.) What’s this name? Wetheran?

**Daisy.** Werthan.

**Trooper.** Werthan. Never heard that one before. What kind of name is that?

**Daisy.** It’s of German derivation.

**Trooper.** German derivation. Unh hunh. (*He hands the papers back to Hoke and waves him on. The Cadillac goes off down the road. The trooper gets back in the patrol car.*) An old nigger and an old Jew* woman takin’ off down the road together. Now that is one sorry sight.

**Second Trooper.** I’ll tell you one sorrier. They’re sittin’ in a Cadillac, and I’m sittin’ here next to you. (*The first trooper guns the car off in the other direction.*)

**DAISY’S CAR, passing cotton fields.**

**Hoke.** You talkin’ ’bout first time before. I tell you ’bout the first time I ever leave the state of Georgia?

**Daisy.** When was that?

**Hoke.** A few minutes back.

**Daisy.** Go on!

**Hoke.** Thass right. First time. My daughter, she married to a Pullman porter, and she all the time goin’—Detroit, New York, St. Louis—and I say, “Well, that very nice, Tommie Lee, but I jes’ doan’ feel the need.” So dis it, Miz Daisy, and I got to tell you, Alabama ain’ lookin’ like much so far.

**Daisy.** It’s nicer the other side of Montgomery.

**Hoke.** If you say so. Pass me up one of them peaches, please, ma’am.

**Daisy.** Oh, no!

**Hoke.** What happen?

**Daisy.** That sign said Phenix City—thirty miles. We’re not supposed to go to Phenix City. We’re going the wrong way!

**Hoke.** Maybe you done read it wrong.

**Daisy.** I didn’t. Stop the car! Stop the car! (Hoke swerves off the road. Daisy wrestles with the map.) Here! You took the wrong turn at Opelika! (*He takes the map.*)

**Hoke.** You took it wid me. And you readin’ the map!

**Daisy.** I’m such a fool! I didn’t have any business coming in the car by myself with just you. I should have come on the train.

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7. *nigger* . . . *Jew*. *Nigger* is an insulting name for an African American. *Jew* (as in this case) may also be derogatory, depending on the speaker’s intent.
I'd be safe there. I just should have come on the train.

Hoke. Yassum. You sho' shoulda'.

DAISY'S CAR, traveling at night. Daisy and Hoke are tired.

Daisy. They've fixed crab for me! Minnie always fixes crab! They go to so much trouble! It's all ruined by now!

Hoke. We got to pull over, Miz Daisy.

Daisy. Is something wrong with the car?

Hoke. Nome. I got to be 'scused.

Daisy. What?

Hoke. I got to make water.

Daisy. You should have thought of that back at the Standard Oil station.

Hoke. Colored cain' use the toilet at no Standard Oil. You know dat.

Daisy. Well, there's no time to stop. We'll be in Mobile soon. You can wait.

Hoke. Yassum. (a beat) Nome. (He stops the car.)

Daisy. I told you to wait!

Hoke. Yassum. I hear you. How you think I feel havin' to ax you when can I make water like I some dog?

Daisy. Why, Hoke! I'd be ashamed!

Hoke. I ain' no dog and I ain' no chile and I ain' just a back of the neck you look at while you going wherever you want to go. I a man, nearly seventy-two years old, and I know when my bladder full, and I gettin' out dis car and goin' off down the road like I got to do. And I'm takin' the car key this time. And that's the end of it! (He gets out of the car and slams the door.

Daisy sits still for a moment, then rolls down the window.)

Daisy. Hoke! (silence) Hoke! (silence) Hoke! (She starts to get out of the car—when a man appears in the shadowy dark. She is frightened.)

Hoke. You all right in there, Miz Daisy?

Daisy (relieved, but quickly her old snappish self). Of course I am!

WALTER'S LIVING ROOM, the next evening. Walter, old and blind, is in a chair surrounded by relatives. Daisy is talking to Boolie by phone.

Daisy (on the phone). Uncle Walter appreciates your call. I don't think he can come to the phone. . . .

BOOLIE'S HOTEL ROOM.

Boolie (on phone). Fine. How is Hoke?

WALTER'S LIVING ROOM.

Daisy (on phone). What do you mean? How should he be? (Uncle Walter's daughter enters with a birthday cake, and the singing of "Happy Birthday" starts.) I have to hang up, Boolie. . . . I'll tell him. . . . Yes, we will. . . . All right. You, too. 'Bye. (Daisy looks at Walter with love and pride. Hoke and Katie Bell enter from the kitchen. Hoke nods gravely at Daisy. She nods back gratefully.)


Boolie (to Hoke). To what do I owe this honor?

Hoke. We got to talk, Mr. Werthan.

Boolie. What is it?
Hoke. It Mist' Sinclair Harris.
Boolie. My cousin Sinclair?
Hoke. His wife.
Boolie. Jeanette?
Hoke. The one talk funny.
Boolie. She's from Canton, Ohio.
Hoke. Yasuh. She's tryin' to hire me.
Boolie. What?
Hoke. She say, "How are they treating you, Hoke?" You know how she sou'n', like her nose stuff up. And I say, "Fine, Miz Harris," and she say, "Well, if you was lookin' for a change, you know where to call." I thought you want to know 'bout it.
Boolie. I'll be . . .
Hoke. Ain' she a mess? (a pause) She say name yo' sal'ry.
Boolie. I see. And did you?
Hoke. Did I what?
Boolie. Name your salary.
Hoke. Now, what you think I am? I ain' studyin' workin' for no trashy somethin' like her.
Boolie. But she got you thinking, didn't she?
Hoke. You might could say dat.
Boolie. Well, how does sixty-five dollars a week sound?
Hoke. Sounds pretty good. Course, seventy-five sounds better.
Boolie. So it does. Beginning this week.
Hoke. Das mighty nice of you, Mist' Werthan. I 'preciate it. Mist' Werthan, you ever had people fightin' over you?
Boolie. No.

Hoke. Well, I tell you. It feel good. (He smiles and walks happily out of the office.)

DAISY'S LIVING ROOM, May 1963. Daisy is playing mah-jongg with Beulah, Miriam, and another woman.

Miriam (putting a tile on the table). Six bams.
Beulah. Mah-jongg!
Miriam. You are the luckiest thing, Beulah!
Daisy. 'Scuse me a second. (She goes to the kitchen. Hoke and Idella are watching a soap opera on a black-and-white TV set. Idella, now old and frail, is shelling peas.)
Daisy. I don't know how y'all can look at that.
Hoke. You see it a few times, you get in it.
Daisy. Both of your brains are fixin' to evaporate. You can bring in the cake now, Hoke.
Hoke. Yassum.
Daisy. Don't make a mess with those peas, Idella.
Idella. Do I ever? (Daisy leaves. Hoke puts napkins, forks, and plates on a tray that holds a cake.)
Hoke (nodding toward the soap opera). Ain't the blonde one got a lotta hair? How do she make it so shiny?
Idella. Washes it in my-naise. (He looks dubious.) Yes, she do. It was in Life magazine.
Hoke. Don' seem human, do it? (He picks up the tray and goes out. The camera focuses on the soap opera. Then Hoke comes back.) What happen? Linda up to somethin', ain' she? (no answer) Idella?
A BAPTIST CHURCH. The congregation is black, except for Daisy, Boolie, and Florine, who sit in the rear. Hoke is sitting with them.

DAISY'S KITCHEN, two months later. Daisy is frying chicken. Hoke enters and watches her.

Hoke. You fixin' to ruin it?
Daisy. What are you talking about?
Hoke. You got de skillet turn up too high, and de chicken too close together.
Daisy. Mind your business.
Hoke. It's yo' chicken. (He leaves the kitchen. Daisy turns the flame down.)

DAISY'S DINING ROOM. Daisy is seated at the table. Hoke enters and puts in front of her a plate of fried chicken, stewed okra, and rice.

Daisy. Thank you, Hoke. (He goes into the kitchen and begins to eat the same meal at the kitchen table.)

DAISY'S YARD, July 1963. Daisy and Hoke are working side by side in a vegetable garden.

DAISY'S LIVING ROOM, winter, 1964. While an ice storm rages outside, Daisy tries to read by candlelight. She hears the back door open and close.

Daisy (alarmed). Who is it?
Daisy. Oh, Hoke. (Hoke enters, wearing an overcoat and galoshes and carrying a small paper bag.) What in the world?

Hoke. I learn to drive on ice when I deliver milk for the Avondale Dairy. Ain' much to it. Other folks bangin' into each other like they in the funny papers, though. Oh, I stop at the Krispy Kreme. Lawd knows you got to have yo' coffee in the mornin'.

Daisy (touched). How sweet of you, Hoke! (He hands her a cup of coffee and sips his own.)

Hoke. We ain' had no good coffee 'roun heah since Idella pass.

Daisy. Mmmm. Hmmm. I can fix her biscuits, and we both know how to make her fried chicken. But nobody can make Idella's coffee. I wonder how she did it.

Hoke. I doan' know. (They sip silently for a moment, deep in thought.)

Daisy. Idella was lucky.
Hoke. Yassum. I 'spec she was. (He starts out of the room.)

Daisy. Where are you going?
Hoke. Take off my overshoes.
Daisy. I didn't think you'd come today.
Hoke. It ain' my day off, is it?
Daisy. Well, I don't know what you can do around here except keep me company.
Hoke. I can light us a fire. (He goes into the kitchen.)

Daisy. Eat anything you want out of the ice-box. It'll all spoil anyway.
Hoke (off camera). Yassum.
Daisy. And wipe up what you tracked onto the kitchen floor.
Hoke (off camera). Now, Miz Daisy, what you think I am? A mess? (The phone rings.)

Daisy (on her way to the phone). Yes. That’s exactly what I think you are.

Hoke (off camera). All right den. All right.

HALLWAY. Daisy answers the phone.

Daisy. Hello?

BOOLIE’S DEN. Intercut between Daisy and Boolie during this conversation.

Boolie. I’ll be out after you as soon as I can get down the driveway.

Daisy. Stay where you are, Boolie. Hoke is here with me.

Boolie. How did he manage that?

Daisy. He’s very handy. I’m fine. I don’t need a thing in the world.

Boolie. Hello? (to Florine) I must have the wrong number. I never heard Mama saying loving things about Hoke before.

Daisy. I didn’t say I love him. I said he was handy.

Boolie. Uh hunh.

Daisy. Honestly, Boolie. Are you trying to irritate me in the middle of an ice storm? (She hangs up.)

Responding to Reading

First Impressions of Part 2
1. Have your feelings about Hoke or Daisy changed? Jot down your thoughts in your journal or notebook.

Second Thoughts on Part 2
2. How has Hoke and Daisy’s relationship changed?
   Think about
   • Daisy’s gift to Hoke
   • their trip to Mobile

3. How would you describe Boolie’s relationship with his mother? Use examples from the play to explain your answer.

4. Why do you think Daisy and Florine resent each other?

Reading On

The play has now entered the 1960s, a time when African Americans campaigned for their rights in the face of sometimes violent resistance. As you read, look for signs of how the society is changing and how each character responds to these changes.
PART 3

TRAFFIC JAM, September 1964. Daisy is in her car. Hoke, walking against the halted traffic, reaches the car.

Daisy. Well, what is it? What took so long?
Hoke. Couldn’t help it. Big mess up yonder.
Daisy. What’s the matter? I might as well not go to temple at all now!
Hoke. You cain’ go to temple today, Miz Daisy.
Daisy. Why not? What in the world is the matter with you?
Hoke. Somebody done bomb the temple.
Daisy. What? Bomb the temple?
Hoke. Yassum. Dat why we stuck here so long.
Daisy. I don’t believe it.
Hoke. Dat what the police tell me up yonder. Say it happen about a half hour ago.
Daisy. Oh, no! Well, was anybody there? Were people hurt?
Hoke. Din’ say.
Daisy. Who would do such a thing?
Hoke. You know good as me. Always be the same ones.
Daisy. Well, it’s a mistake. I’m sure they meant to bomb one of the Conservative synagogues or the Orthodox one. The temple is Reform. Everybody knows that.
Hoke. It doan’ matter to them people. A Jew is a Jew to them folks. Jes’ like light or dark, we all the same nigger. (Daisy dabs her eyes with a Kleenex.) I know jes’ how you feel, Miz Daisy. Back down there above Macon on the farm—I ’bout ten or ’leven years old—and one day my frien’ Porter, his daddy hangin’ from a tree. And the day befo’, he laughin’ and pitchin’ horseshoes wid us. And den he hangin’ up yonder wid his hands tie behind his back an’ the flies all over him. I threw up right where I was standin’. You go on and cry.

Daisy. I’m not crying. (collecting herself)
Why did you tell me that story?
Hoke. I doan’ know. Seem like disheah mess put me in mind of it.
Daisy. The temple has nothing to do with that!
Hoke. So you say.
Daisy. You don’t even know what happened. How do you know that policeman was telling the truth?
Hoke. Now, why would a policeman go and lie ’bout a thing like dat?
Daisy. Well, you never get things right anyway.
Hoke. Miz Daisy, somebody done bomb dat place, and you know it, too.
Daisy. Go on. Just go on now. I don’t want to hear any more about it.
Hoke. You de boss.
Daisy. Stop talking to me!

THE COMMERCE CLUB, summer, 1966. A dozen businessmen are seated at a long table. Boolie is at one end, flanked by Florine and Daisy. One man, who is standing and holding a large silver bowl, beckons to Boolie. Boolie rises and takes the trophy.

Boolie. Thank you, Wellborn. And thank you all. I am deeply grateful to be chosen 1966 Man of the Year by the Atlanta Business Council—an honor I’ve seen...
Daisy. Miss McClatchey gave me your message.

Daisy. Florine’s invited, too.

Boolie. Thank you very much.

Daisy. I guess Hoke should drive us. There’ll be a crowd.

Boolie. Mama, we have to talk about this. You know, I believe Martin Luther King has done some mighty fine things.

Daisy. Boolie, if you don’t want to go, why don’t you just come right out and say so?

Boolie. I want to go. You know how I feel about him.

Daisy. Of course, but Florine—

Boolie. Florine has nothing to do with it. I still have to conduct business in this town.

Daisy. I sec. You will go out of business if you attend the King dinner.

Boolie. Not exactly. But a lot of men I do business with wouldn’t like it. They might snicker a little and call me Martin Luther Werthan behind my back. Maybe I wouldn’t hear about certain meetings at the Commerce Club. Jack Raphael, over at Ideal Mills, he’s a New York Jew instead of a Georgia Jew, and the really smart ones come from New York, don’t they? So some of the boys might start throwing business to Jack instead of to old Martin Luther Werthan. I don’t know. Maybe it wouldn’t happen, but that’s the way it works. If we don’t use those seats, somebody else will.

Daisy. I’m not supposed to go, either?
Boolie. Mama, you can do whatever you want.

Daisy. Thanks for your permission.

Boolie. Can I ask you something? When did you get so fired up about Martin Luther King? Time was, I'd have heard a different story.

Daisy. Why, Boolie! I've never been prejudiced, and you know it!

Boolie. OK. Why didn’t you ask Hoke to go to the dinner with you?

Daisy. Hoke? Don’t be ridiculous! He wouldn’t go!

Boolie. Ask him and see.

KITCHEN. Hoke sits at the table, squinting at the paper through thick glasses. Daisy enters.

Daisy. All right. (They go out and get in the car. Hoke drives down the driveway, almost hitting the mailbox.) I don’t know why you still drive. You can’t see.

Hoke. Yassum, I can.

Daisy. You didn’t see that mailbox.

Hoke. How do you know what I din’ see?

Daisy. It nearly poked through my window. This car is all scratched up.

Hoke. Ain’ no sucha thing.

Daisy. How would you know? You can’t see. What a shame. It’s a brand-new car, too.

Hoke. You done had this car two years come March.

MAIN THOROUGHFARE.

Daisy. You forgot to turn.

Hoke. Ain’ this dinner at the Biltmo’?

Daisy. You know it is.

Hoke. Biltmo’ this way.

Daisy. You know so much!

Hoke. Yassum. I do.

Daisy. I’ve lived in Atlanta all my life.

Hoke. And ain’ run a car in twenty years.

Daisy. Boolie said the silliest thing the other day.

Hoke. That right? (a long beat) Well, what did he say?

Daisy. Well, he was talking about Martin Luther King. (a beat) I guess you know him, don’t you?

Hoke. Martin Luther King? Nome.

Daisy. I was sure you did. But you’ve heard him preach?

Hoke. Same way as you, over the TV.

Daisy. I think he’s wonderful.

Hoke. Yassum. (a long beat) What you getting at, Miz Daisy?

Daisy. Well, it’s so silly! Boolie said you wanted to go to this dinner with me. Did you tell him that?

Hoke. Nome.

Daisy. I didn’t think so. You can hear him whenever you want.

Hoke. You want the front do’ or the side do’ to the Biltmo’?

Daisy. You pick. Isn’t it wonderful the way things are changing?

BILTMORE HOTEL. Hoke stops the car by the front entrance. He turns in his seat to face Daisy.

Hoke. What you think I am, Miz Daisy?

Daisy. What do you mean?
Hoke. You think I some old somethin’ sittin’ up here doan’ know nothin’ ’bout how to do?

Daisy. I don’t know what you’re talking about.

Hoke. Invitation to disheah dinner come in the mail a month ago. Did be you want me to go wid you, how come you wait till we in the car and on the way to ask me?

Daisy. What? All I said was that Boolie said you wanted to go.


Daisy. Well, my stars! Aren’t you a big baby!

Hoke. Ne’er mind baby. Next time you ask me someplace, ask me regular.

Daisy. You don’t have to carry on so much!

Hoke. Thass all. Less drop it.

Daisy. Honestly!

Hoke. You talkin’ ’bout things change. They ain’ change all dat much. (He opens his door.) I hep you to the do’.

Daisy. Thank you, Hoke. I can help myself. (Daisy gets out and enters the hotel. Hoke makes no effort to help her.)

HOTEL BALLROOM. The room is filled with people sitting at tables, listening to Dr. King.

Dr. King (off camera). . . . Segregation has placed the whole South socially, educationally, and economically behind the rest of the nation. Yet there are in the white South millions of people of good will whose voices are yet unheard, whose course is yet unclear, and whose courageous acts are yet unseen. . . .

DAISY’S CAR. Hoke is listening to the speech on the radio.

Dr. King (off camera). These persons are often silent today because of fear—fear of social, political, and economic reprisals. In the name of human dignity, and for the cause of democracy, these millions are called upon to gird their courage, to speak out, to offer leadership that is needed.

HOTEL BALLROOM.

Dr. King (off camera). If the people of good will of the white South fail to act now, history will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people, but the appalling silence and the indifference of the good people.

DAISY’S KITCHEN, March 1970. Hoke enters the back door.

Hoke (calling). Mornin’, Miz Daisy. (no answer) Miz Daisy? (He goes into the dining room, where all the drawers in the sideboard are open. He goes into the front hall.) Miz Daisy?

Daisy (off camera). Hoke! Is that Hoke?

8. vitriolic: (vi’trē ə lık) harsh and biting.
Hoke. Yassum. You all right? (Daisy makes her way slowly downstairs. Her hair is in disarray.)

Daisy. Hoke? Hoke?

Hoke. Yassum.

Daisy. Where did you put my papers?

Hoke. What papers, Miz Daisy?

Daisy. My papers! I had them all corrected last night, and I put them in the front so I wouldn’t forget them on my way to school. What did you do with them? (She goes unsteadily into the den. Hoke follows.)

Hoke. School? What you talkin’ ’bout? (Daisy rifling through drawers.)

Daisy. The children will be so disappointed if I don’t give them their homework back. I always give it back the next day. That’s why they like me.

Hoke. You talkin’ outta yo’ head!

Daisy. Why aren’t you helping me?

Hoke. What you want me to do, Miz Daisy?

Daisy. Find those papers! I told you. It’s all right if you moved them. I won’t be mad with you. But I’ve got to get to school now. I’ll be late, and who will take care of my class? Oh, I do everything wrong. (She totters into the living room. Hoke follows her.)

Hoke. Set down. You ’bout to fall and hurt yoseff.

Daisy. It doesn’t matter. It’s all my fault. I didn’t do right. It’s so awful!

Hoke. Now you lissen heah. Ain’ nothin’ awful ’cep the way you carryin’ on.

Daisy. I’m so sorry. It’s all my fault. I can’t find the papers, and the children are waiting.

Hoke. No, they ain’. You ain’ no teacher no mo’.

Daisy. It doesn’t make any difference.

Hoke. Miz Daisy, ain’ nothin’ the matter wid you.

Daisy. You don’t know! You don’t know! What’s the difference?

Hoke. Your mind done took a turn this mornin’. Thass all. (She has now worked her way to the front hall. Hoke dials a number quickly.)

Hoke (into the phone). Lemme have ’im, Miz McClatchey.

Daisy. Go on. Just go on now.

BOOLIE’S OFFICE.

Boolie (into the phone). What can I do for you this morning? (Intercut between Boolie and Hoke during this conversation.)

Hoke. It yo’ mama.

Boolie. What’s the matter?

Hoke. She worked up.

Boolie. Why should today be different from any other day?

Hoke. No, this ain’ the same. (Daisy pulls a drawer out of the commode, and it crashes to the floor.)

Boolie. I’ll be right there.

9. commode: a chest of drawers; bureau.
STAIRCASE. Daisy starts upstairs. Hoke follows her.

Hoke. You snap right back if you jes’ let yoself.

Daisy. I can’t! I can’t!

Hoke. You a lucky ole woman! You know dat?

Daisy. No! No! It’s all a mess now. And I can’t do anything about it. (She goes into Boolie’s old bedroom. Hoke settles her in a chair.)

Hoke. You rich, you well fo’ yo’ time, and you got people care ’bout what happen to you.

Daisy. I’m being trouble. Oh, I don’t want to be trouble to anybody.

Hoke. You want somethin’ to cry ’bout, I take you to the state home, show you what layin’ out dere in de halls. An’ I bet none of them take on as bad as yo’ doin’.

Daisy (less agitated, but still confused). I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. Those poor children in my class.

Hoke. You keep dis up, I promise, Mist’ Werthan call the doctor on you, and dat doctor gon’ take you in the insane asylum ‘fore you know what hit you. Dat de way you want it to be?

Daisy (in her normal voice). Hoke, do you still have that Oldsmobile?

Hoke. From when I firs’ come here? Go on, Miz Daisy. Dat thing been in the junkyard fifteen years or mo’. I drivin’ yo’ next to las’ car now; ‘65 Cadillac, runnin’ fine as wine.

Daisy. You ought not to be driving anything, the way you see.

Hoke. How you know the way I see, ‘less you lookin’ outta my eyes?

Daisy. Hoke?

Hoke. Yassum?

Daisy. You’re my best friend.

Hoke. Come on, Miz Daisy. You jes’—

Daisy. No. Really. You are. You are. (She takes his hand.)

Hoke. Yassum.
LIVING ROOM, November 1973. The furniture is gone. Boolie, now sixty-five, is checking a moving carton. Hoke, now eighty-five, shuffles into the room.

Hoke. Mornin', Mist' Werthan.

Boolie. Hey, Hoke! Good to see you! You didn't drive yourself out here?

Hoke. No, suh. I doan' drive no mo'. My granddaughter run me out.

Boolie. Is she old enough to drive?

Hoke. Michelle thirty-seven. Teach biology at Spelman College.

Boolie. I never knew that.

Hoke. Yassuh.

Boolie. I've taken most of what I want out of the house. Is there anything you'd like before the Goodwill comes?

Hoke. My place full to bustin' now.

Boolie. It feels funny to sell the house while Mama's still alive.

Hoke. I 'gree.

Boolie. But she hasn't been inside the door for two years now. I suppose you don't get out to see Mama very much.


Boolie. I'm sure she appreciates it.

Hoke. Some days she better than others. Who ain't? (Boolie takes Hoke's arm as they head for the back door.)

Boolie. Happy Thanksgiving, Mama. Look who I brought.

Hoke. Mornin', Miz Daisy. (She nods.) You keepin' yoseff busy? (no response)

Boolie. She certainly is. She goes to jewelry making—how many times a week, is it, Mama? She makes all kinds of things. Pins and bracelets. She's a regular Tiffany's.10

Hoke. Ain't that somethin'? (Daisy seems far away.)

Boolie. Hoke, you know I thought of you the other morning on the expressway. I saw an Avondale milk truck.

Hoke. You doan' say.

Boolie. A big monster of a thing; must've had sixteen wheels. I wonder how you'd have liked driving that around.

Daisy (suddenly). Hoke came to see me, not you.

Hoke. This is one of her good days.

Boolie. Florine says to wish you a happy Thanksgiving. She's in Washington, you know. (no response) You remember, Mama. She's a Republican National Committee woman now.

Daisy. Good Lord! (Hoke laughs. Boolie grins.) Boolie!

Boolie. What is it, Mama?

Daisy. Go charm the nurses.

NURSING HOME, sun porch. Daisy is sitting in a sunny corner, her walker close by. She is ninety-seven years old and very fragile. Boolie and Hoke appear.

Boolie. Happy Thanksgiving, Mama. Look who I brought.

Hoke. Mornin', Miz Daisy. (She nods.) You keepin' yoseff busy? (no response)

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Daisy. Good Lord! (Hoke laughs. Boolie grins.) Boolie!

Boolie. What is it, Mama?

Daisy. Go charm the nurses.

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10. Tiffany's: name of a well-known expensive jewelry store.
Boolie (to Hoke). She wants you all to herself. You're a doodle, Mama. (He leaves. Daisy dozes for a minute. Then she looks at Hoke.)

Daisy. Boolie payin' you still?

Hoke. Every week.

Daisy. How much?

Hoke. That between me an' him, Miz Daisy.

Daisy. Highway robbery. (She closes her eyes, then opens them.) How are you?

Hoke. Doin' the bes' I can.

Daisy. Me, too.

Hoke. Well, thass all there is to it, then. (She nods, smiles. He sees an untouched slice of pumpkin pie on the table beside her.) Looka here. You ain' eat yo' Thanksgiving pie. (She tries to pick up her fork. He gently takes it from her.) Lemme help you wid it. (He cuts a small piece of pie and carefully feeds it to her. She is delighted. It tastes good. He feeds her another. And another. The end.)
Responding to Reading

First Impressions of Part 3

1. What are your feelings at the end of the play? Write down your response in your journal or notebook.

Second Thoughts on Part 3

2. Irony occurs when an outcome is the opposite of what might have been expected. What is ironic about the ending of the play?
   Think about
   • how you expected Daisy and Hoke to act before you read the play
   • the contrast between the play’s ending and its opening

3. In your opinion, what caused Daisy and Hoke to form a bond of the heart?

4. Do you think Hoke changes during the course of the play? Explain.

5. Daisy says twice in the play, “I’m not prejudiced!” Do you agree with her statements, both at the beginning and at the end of the play? Explain, using examples from the play.

Broader Connections

6. The original Uncle Tom was a character from a famous antislavery novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin. As a slave, he humbly obeyed the will of his white masters. Morgan Freeman, the actor who played Hoke in the movie, was concerned that his character not be seen as an Uncle Tom. Does Hoke act like an Uncle Tom? Why or why not?

Literary Concept: Foil

A foil is a character who provides a striking contrast to a main character. Foils help to draw attention to certain qualities in the main character. Which characters serve as foils to Daisy? What aspects of her personality do they highlight?

Concept Review: Climax Which scene do you consider to be the climax or turning point of the play?
Writing Options

1. Choose your favorite scene in the play. Write director's notes for that scene, advising the actors how they should play it and what qualities they should convey.

2. Imagine that the producer of the film suggested cutting the scene with the speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. As the writer, write a memo to the producer to explain the importance of that scene.

3. Choose another African American you have read about in this textbook. How would he or she have gotten along with Miss Daisy? Write a short dramatic scene, in play form, in which the two characters meet for the first time.

4. Do you think this play should be taught next year? Write a persuasive letter to your teacher, stating your opinion and supporting it with reasons.

Vocabulary Practice

Exercise  Choose the word from the list that best completes each sentence. Use each word only once. Write the answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. The lynching of his friend's father upset Hoke; he found the action ___.

2. If someone committed another act of violence to revenge the bombing, it would be a ___.

3. Alone with Boolie, Florine showed her feelings toward her mother-in-law by ___ at her.

4. Boolie was sure that Daisy would ___ another car if she were allowed to drive.

5. Hoke took good care of the inside of the car, including the ___.

6. Boolie felt better knowing that Daisy was in the car with a driver like Hoke who showed ___.

7. Boolie responded ___ to Daisy's claim that Hoke was a thief.

8. Daisy's reaction to any gifts from Florine was to ___ from them.

9. Daisy could have bought ___ care for her husband's grave but preferred to provide it herself.

10. Daisy told the state troopers that the ___ of her name was German.
Options for Learning

1. At the Movies  Obtain a video of the movie Driving Miss Daisy to show in class or watch at home. Then have a panel discussion with others who have seen the film. Act as movie critics to discuss how well the movie matched your interpretations of the screenplay. For example, did Jessica Tandy portray Daisy as you had imagined her? Did Dan Aykroyd and Morgan Freeman portray Boolie and Hoke in the way you expected? Discuss all the differences that you noticed between the movie and the screenplay.

2. The March of Time  Research the progress that African Americans made from 1948–1973, the period of this play. On a large sheet of paper, make a time line showing major events in the struggle for racial equality.

3. That’s Entertainment  As a class, select your favorite scene from the play. Then hold auditions for the parts by taking turns reading. After the parts are assigned, rehearse your scene and perform for the class.

4. Friends and Foes  Like Daisy and Hoke, Jews and African Americans have had a long and sometimes troubled relationship. Read through history books and current magazines to find out more about this subject. Report your findings to the class.

FACT FINDER  History
In what year was Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated?

Alfred Uhry
1936–

If Alfred Uhry hadn’t returned to his roots when he did, the world might never have known Hoke and Miss Daisy. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Uhry began his career in drama in New York as a lyricist, or song writer, for musicals. In 1975, Uhry wrote both the script and song lyrics for a hit musical entitled The Robber Bridegroom. After this hit, however, success seemed to escape Uhry’s grasp, and he returned to teaching at New York University.

In his words, “Something whispered in my ear that it was time to sit down and write a play.” He remembered his grandmother, who had become a family legend because of her bad temper. She insisted on driving long after it was safe for her to do so, and eventually the family found her a black chauffeur. Thus, the idea for Miss Daisy was born.

Today, Uhry still writes in New York for both the theater and film industries.