

**ACT II**  
**SCENE X - SECRETS**

**SETTING:** Outside in the alley behind Clay's Place

**AT RISE:** Clay and his cousin Turner are engaged in a heated argument.

(Silence as Turner paces the lot trying to find the words to say, occasionally stops and looks at Clay in disbelief)

TURNER

I can't b'lieve this! What them goons walkin' up in your place for? (Beat) So that's how you got the money to open up this place? Tell me that's not what you did man!

CLAY

I ain't did nuthin' wrong!

TURNER

Ain't did nuthin' wrong? Nigga you know dem low down street rats! You know what they did to us. Shit man you said you had a investor.

CLAY

Look man, the bank wouldn't give me nuthin'. Not even the colored bank. An' I meant what I said when I told Edna I was openin' up this joint. All I gotta do is pay on time. Why the hell is you actin' like this?

TURNER

Clay! Do you hear ya'self? Why am I actin' like this? Dem jackasses almost got my ass locked up. (Pause) We made a deal that we was goin' legit, and you don' got us caught up in some more bullshit.

CLAY

Us! Man you ain't got nuthin' to do with this! (Beat) So... What? I guess you better-den-me now huh negro? Yo ass still in there hustlin' folks at the table but you better-den-me?

TURNER

Look here Clay, ain't nobody said all hat, but after them scum bags almost had me take the rap for they asses, we said we ain't

getting' caught up no mo; we said it was you and me, remember? I ain't hurtin' nobody at that card table. We all know what we gettin' into when we sit down.

CLAY

(Pause) Turner, have you looked at Edna's face lately? Have you seen how happy she is? She love talkin' to the customers. She stay up half the night makin' pies to sell. I ain't neva seen her so happy; an'so help me God, Ima keep that smile right on huh face. She been believin' in me for a long time. I owes it to her. This the best thing I ever did. (Pause) I'm fin'ly sumbody Turner. I fin'ly feel like folk ain't lookin' down on me. I got respect now like I ain't never had before. I'm Mr. Carter now. That's what they say to me, not the sharecropper's boy, not Turner's cousin', not Edna's husband, I'm Clay Carter and this here is my place.

TURNER

Not if you 6 feet under. (Beat) But look here Clay cuz you don' even get it. You know what's really botherin' me right now? It's cuz you ain't even tell me about this shit. We don' been thru hell and high water together. Now that right there, that hurts. We coulda figured out sum way to get the money but you done got caught up with Whyman and that means stupid Elmore and Winkie's dumb asses. They is real criminals! That's what they is. We ain't like them Clay! This jes' asking for trouble. (Pause) Dammit Clay!

CLAY

See, I ain't tell you cuz I knew you was gon' act like this. That is 'xactly why I didn't tell yo ass. You standin' up here tryna preach to me, like you sum kinda of saint. (Beat) You right tho, we been throo some shit together and I'm tryna make it right. That's all I'm doin'.

TURNER

Make it right? How c'uld you do that with them dumbass pieces of shit? I may be a lot of thangs Clay, but I'm tryna to be a stand-up man. I'm tryna stay outta trouble! I'm tryna get my woman back. (Beat) I thought we had a deal man. You done gon' an broke that.

CLAY

I ain't broke nuthin'. I'ma pay dem clowns back and we gon' to be done wit 'em.

TURNER

You broke the deal man! (Pause) You wanted to open up dis joint an be all legit right? An I was gonna get a reg'lar job and help yo ass. That was the deal.

CLAY

(Humph) That'll be sho the day when Turner Davis gets a reg'lar job.

TURNER

Thanks for yo faith in me man. But you know what? I already don' put in a paper-uh application for-da-city and I'm prob'ly gon' get the job too.

CLAY

Man you can barely read, what job you gon' get?

TURNER

(Hesitantly) They lookin' for uh sani.. sanitation men, so I applied. Barnes helped me fill in the paper. He workin' down 'ere. He say they got benefits in case you die or sumthin', so to hell wit you Clay.

CLAY

(Laughs) Well I'll be a son of a gun. Turner Davis, emptying garbage cans. Hell, I'm glad I done what I done. Beats pickin' up sumbody's trash.

TURNER

Ain't no shame in it Clay. It's honest work! Legit! Like I thought we agreed to. Now you the one actin' like you better all of a sudden. (Beat) How much you owe Whyman?

CLAY

Look man, I got it under control.

TURNER

How much you owe 'em Clay? And tell da truth. I know when you lyin'. This is me, tell me da truth.

CLAY

(Hesitates) I...I owe 'em \$6,000.

TURNER

Clay! What the hell...!?!

CLAY

I'ma have they money. I'm puttin' some aside ev'ry week. We doin' fairly good in here Turner, we jes' need to...

TURNER

(Interrupts) By when Clay?

**(Both get quiet as they hear a car door opens and they wait until the customer gets in car and pulls off.)**

CLAY

(to the customers first, then lowers voice to continue conversation with Turner)

Y'all take it easy now. Come on back next week hear? Look, I already don paid 3 months. First month I was short, but I got...I got 3 more months to go.

TURNER

An dem idiots jes' show up to yo place of business to give you a fren'ly reminder huh? (beat) How much you bringin' in?

CLAY

We bringin' in about \$300-\$600 After expenses, we clearin' about 400 a week right now. But...

TURNER

(interrupts)

Clay, you is a dead nigga. \$1,600 a month Clay? I may cain't read dat good, but I can count and dis don't add up Clay. It don't add up to no \$6,000. Shit! These jackasses charge int'rest man! (Beat) This ain't really even your place Clay!

CLAY

I was gon' raise the price of some of my drinks man and start selling that corn, that lightning, the good stuff.. at a premium. We gon' sell some more of Edna's pies. Man, I'ma make it work. (Pause)I got to.

TURNER

You damn right you got to make this shit work. Hell, I was tryna' be done with that life man. Now we gotta get this damn money together.

CLAY

Turner I don' tol' you, this ain't none of your problem.