

Fences

EXT. BACKYARD—MORNING

Cory walks into the yard and sees Rose...

Rose: Cory?! Cory...Cory....Oh, Lord have mercy. *(Hugging then slowly pulling apart)*. Look-a-here....Look-a-here.

Cory: I'm all grown up now mama. What are you crying about?

Rose: Nothing, I'm just so glad you made it. What took you so long?

Cory: You know how the Marines are mama. They gotta get all their paperwork straight before they let you do anything.

Rose: Ahh!! I'm sure glad you made it. They let Lyons come, and your uncle Gabe still in the hospital. They don't know if they gonna let him out or not. I talked to him a little while ago. Come on, let me fix you some breakfast to keep up your strength.

Cory: I ain't hungry, mama

Rose: You sure you don't want something, Cory? I know they ain't feeding you right.

Cory: No, mama thanks. I don't feel like eating. I'll get something later.

(Rose nods her head and heads for the door. Cory is alone outside looking at the bat and ball)
(Beat.)

Rose: *(as she comes down back steps)*: Ain't too much changed. He still got that piece of rag tied to that tree. He was out here swinging that bat. I was just ready to go back in the house. He swung that bat and then he just fell over. Seem like he swung it and stood there with this grin on his face . . . and then he just fell over. They carried him on down to the hospital but I knew there wasn't no need . . . why don't you come on in the house.

Cory: Mama . . . I got something to tell you. I don't know how to tell you this . . . but I've got to tell you . . . I'm not going to Papa's funeral.

Rose: Boy, hush your mouth. That's your daddy you talking about. I don't want hear that kind of talk this morning. I done raised you to come to this? You standing there all healthy and grown talking about you ain't going to your daddy's funeral?

Cory: Mama . . . listen . . .

Rose: I don't want to hear it, Cory. You just get that thought out of your head.

Cory: I've got to say no to him. One time in my life I've got to say no.

Rose: Don't nobody have to listen to nothing like that. I know you and your daddy ain't seen eye to eye, but I ain't gotta listen to that kind of talk this morning. Disrespecting your daddy ain't

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gonna make you a man, Cory. You got to find a way to come to that on your own. Not going to your daddy's funeral ain't gonna make you a man.

(Beat.)

Cory: The whole time I was growing up . . . living in his house . . . Papa was like a shadow that followed you everywhere. It weighed on you and sunk into your flesh. It would wrap around you and lay there until you couldn't tell which one was you anymore. That shadow digging in your flesh. Trying to crawl in. Trying to live through you. Everywhere I looked, Troy Maxson was staring back at me...hiding under the bed...in the closet. I'm just saying I've got to find a way to get rid of that shadow, Mama.

Rose: You just like him. You got him in you good.

Cory: Don't tell me that, Mama.

Rose: You Troy Maxson all over again.

Cory: I don't want to be Troy Maxson. I want to be me.

Rose: You can't be nobody but who you are, Cory. That shadow wasn't nothing but you growing into your- self. You either got to grow into it or cut it down to fit you. But that's all you got to make life with. That's all you got to measure yourself against that world out there. Your daddy wanted you to be everything he wasn't . . . and at the same time he tried to make you into everything he was. I don't know if he was right or wrong . . . but I do know he meant to do more good than he meant to do harm. Sometimes when he touched he bruised. And some- times when he took me in his arms he cut.

(beat)

When I first met your daddy I thought, "Here is a man I can lay down with and make a baby." That's the first thing I thought when I seen him . . . "Rose Lee, here is a man that you can open your-self up to and be filled to bursting. Here is a man that can fill all them empty spaces you been tip- ping around the edges of."

(beat)

When your daddy walked through the house he was so big he filled it up. That was my first mistake. Not to make him leave some room for me. But I wanted a house that I could sing in, and that's what your daddy gave me. I didn't know to keep up his strength I had to give up little pieces of mine. I took on his life as mine and mixed up the pieces so that you couldn't hardly tell which was which anymore. It was my choice. It was my life and I didn't have to live it like that. But that's what life offered me in the way of being a woman and I took it. I grabbed hold of it with both hands. By the time Raynell came into the house . . . I didn't want to make my blessing off of nobody's misfor- tune, but I took on to Raynell like she was all them babies I had wanted and never had. Like I'd been blessed to relive a part of my life. And if the Lord see fit to keep up my strength . . . I'm gonna do her just like your daddy did you . . . I'm gonna give her the best of what's in me.