

AT THE JAIL

(SOFIA sits in her cell alone, badly beaten...the GUARD escorts CELIE into the cell and leaves...CELIE sees SOFIA and gasps...SOFIA doesn't even look up)

CELIE



Sofia. It's me, Celie. Can you hear me? I come to...to see if I can do anything for you.

(she puts some water on a cloth)

CELIE

This water might feel a little cold, but it gon' take down some of that swelling. I see a couple places could use a little dab of alcohol on 'em, but you tell me if I'm hurtin' you now, all right?

(trying to lighten up)

And if you got any ideas how I'm gon' tame yo hair, you tell me them too.

(SOFIA manages to move one hand toward CELIE...CELIE wraps her arms around SOFIA and rocks her like she was a baby)

CELIE

Your kids are all doin' fine at your sister's.

(a moment)

And my sister, Nettie, turn out she a missionary in Africa. Can you imagine that? And my kids are there with Nettie.

(trying to keep talking)

Oh Sofia, when you get home, and Nettie get home, us gon' have a big picnic...all of us and all of our kids.

(the GUARD enters)

END

GUARD

Miss Celie.

ACT 2

AFRICA/MAIN STREET

(CELIE reads as NETTIE sings and talks)

#19 AFRICA (PART 1)

~~NETTIE~~

~~DEAR CELIE, OH I LOVE YOU~~
~~YEARS GO BY AND STILL YOU'RE WITH ME~~
~~ALL WE SHARE IS ONE BIG SKY~~
~~I PRAY FOR YOUR REPLY~~

NETTIE

→ When Mister threw me out that day, I was so mad, I went straight to the church. But when the Reverend's wife opened the door, she had two little children with her. And something about those children made my mad go away. So I asked if they needed help with those children, and they said they were going to Africa as missionaries and maybe I could come with them.

~~CELIE~~

~~Nettie a missionary!~~

NETTIE

Then one day on the boat over here...the Reverend asked me about my family. And I told him about you and everything happened to you...and he told me, Celie! He's the one Pa gave your babies to! Adam and Olivia are right here with me.

END

(NETTIE shows CELIE the children)

~~CELIE~~

~~My babies!~~

NETTIE

I TEACH YOUR CHILDREN ABC'S
FOR MY MISSIONARY FAMILY
THESE BABIES SENT BY GOD ARE YOURS

NETTIE & CELIE

ADAM AND OLIVIA ALIVE, ALIVE

SOPHIA/©
MISTER

~~Sofia, Sofia~~


~~HARPO~~

~~MISTER~~

~~Celie, get me some lemonade.~~

(SOFIA watches in amazement as CELIE timidly goes for lemonade)

MISTER

 Young girls ain't no good these days. Legs open to every Tom, Dick, and Harpo.

SOFIA

I ain't that kind.

(MISTER laughs)

MISTER

And I ain't gon' let my boy marry you cuz you in the family way. A pretty gal like you--mebbe you want his money.

SOFIA

He don't have any money. You buy his food and clothes. What do I want to marry Harpo for when he still livin' here with you?

(CELIE hands MISTER a glass of lemonade...he waves it away)

MISTER

Ain't cold enough. You want my Harpo cause your daddy done put you out. You 'bout to live in the street!

SOFIA

I ain't livin' in no street. I take my baby to my sister and her husband's. I don't stay nowhere they don't treat me right.

(she heads off, looking back)

SOFIA

Come on, Harpo!

(HARPO stands)

MISTER

(to Harpo)
Don't you move, boy.

(HARPO feels caught in between them and is
afraid to move)

CELIE

(to SOFIA)
You want some lemonade?

(SOFIA empties the glass)

SOFIA

At least somebody around here knows how to treat a lady! Don't
make me wait too long, Harpo!

(SOFIA leaves)

END

#9 DEAR GOD-SOFIA

MISTER

Harpo!

(CELIE smiles suddenly)

CELIE

DEAR GOD
I LOVE DIS WOMAN
MY FRIEND SOFIA
HARPO HE LOVE HER
AND HE SMILE EV'RYTIME HE SEE HER
AIN'T NEVER SEEN SUCH A VISION
COW BOSSIN' THE BULL AROUND
AIN'T AFRAID 'A NOTHIN'
WHEN SHE LAY THE LAW DOWN
TOOK HARPO'S HAND
NOW SHE HAVIN' HIS BABIES
SHE RULE THE HOUSE
NOW IT'S DRIVIN' HIM CRAZY
SHE GIVE HIM LIP
AND NOW HE JUST FIT TO BE TIED

SHUG (D)

IN THE BEDROOM



CELIE

(works on SHUG's dress)

You gained a little weight back, but not enough, yet.

SHUG

Tell me the truth, Miss Celie. Do you mind if Albert sleep with me?

CELIE

You still love him?

SHUG

I got what you call a passion for him. He weak, I know, but he smell right to me. He make me laugh.

CELIE

And you like to sleep with him?

SHUG

I just love it. Don't you?

CELIE

I don't like it at all. Most times I pretend I ain't there. He never know the difference. Just do his business, get off, go to sleep.

SHUG

Do his business? You make it sound like he goin' to the toilet on you.

CELIE

That what it feel like.

SHUG

You never enjoy it ever?

CELIE

No, never. He think I'm ugly. It all right.

SHUG

No. You ain't ugly. You the grace of God if I ever saw it. I had an ounce of what you got, I wouldn't have to run around shakin' my titties and wavin' my ass in everybody face.

(a moment)

SHUG (CONT'D)

You don't believe me.

(SHUG takes CELIE over to the mirror)

SHUG

Miss Celie, Miss Celie...look here. Look at yourself.

END

#14 TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS

SHUG

MM MM

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE KIND OF GAI
THAT HAD A LOT TO SAY
I SAYS THE THINGS THAT'S ON MY MIND
TOO DUMB TO SHY AWAY
BUT YOU HUSH MY MOUTH AND STILL ME
WITH A SONG I NEVER HEARD
I GUESS THAT MEANS THAT YOU ARE JUST
TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS

I SEEN THIS LIFE FROM HIGH AND LOW
AND ALL THAT'S IN BETWEEN
I DANCED WITH DUKES, CROONED WITH COUNTS
BEEN COURTED LIKE A QUEEN
BUT WHEN I SEE WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART
ALL THE REST IS BLURRED
THE GRACE YOU BRING INTO THIS WORLD'S
TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS

YOU HIDE YOUR HEAD UNDER YOUR WINGS
JUST LIKE A LITTLE BIRD
OH DON'T YOU KNOW YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL
TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS

OO, CELIE
YOU'RE TOO BEAUTIFUL FOR WORDS

(lights close in on the two of them...CELIE
smiles)

ANOTHER DAY--IN THE FIELD

MISTER

→ You got some kinda war goin' on down at yo house, boy? I could hear Sofia yellin' at you all morning. What'd you say?

HARPO

It don't matter what I say. She do what she want.

MISTER

Women in Sofia family all crazy, you know that.

HARPO

This morning, I tell her she can't be all the time goin' to visit her sister. Us married now, I tell her. Your place is with the chirren. She say, "I'll take the chirren with me." I say, "Your place is with me." She say, "You want to come?"

MISTER

You ever hit her?

HARPO

Naw suh.

MISTER

Well how you 'spect her mind? Wives is like chirren. Nothing better for 'em than a good sound beatin'.

(HARPO comes over to CELIE)

HARPO

What you think, Miss Celie?

CELIE

I think you happy with Sofia. You been married three years and you still whistle and sing.

HARPO

I want her to jump when I call her, like you do when Pa call you.

CELIE

(hangs her head)

Well, if that's what you want, then you gon' have to beat her.

END

SQUEAK (F)

~~HARPO (CONT'D)~~
~~BIG EYED~~

~~BROWN LEGGED~~

~~BUDDIES (CONT'D)~~

~~BIG EYED~~

~~BROWN LEGGED~~

~~HARPO & BUDDIES~~

~~WHATEVER SHE IS~~
THAT GIRL SHO IS FINE
WHATEVER SHE IS
THAT GIRL SHO IS FINE

~~BUDDIES~~

~~SHO IS FINE~~

~~HARPO & BUDDIES~~

~~Uh-h.~~

(SQUEAK reappears)



SQUEAK

Who gon' sing at yo Juke Joint?

HARPO

Whoever want to, I guess.

SQUEAK

I always wanted to sing.

HARPO

What you sing about--bein' skinny?

SQUEAK

You git Shug Avery come sing here you make a lot of money. She comin' to town, you know. Everybody gettin' ready to lock up they men, my Mama say.

HARPO

Uh-huh.

SQUEAK

Is it true her Daddy the preacher? Only he don't speak to her no more on account of her having all those babies and not marryin' their Daddy? Who their Daddy, you know?

HARPO

He my Daddy, I think. Only his Daddy wouldn't let him marry her.

SQUEAK

Then Shug Avery practically yo Mama. She sing fo you, Harpo. I know she will. You so pretty.

(MEN laugh)

HARPO

Men ain't pretty.

SQUEAK

You is.

END

(she starts to sing...the MEN are her backup band)

SQUEAK

IF YOU WANNA EAT DA APPLE OFFA DIS HERE TREE

HARPO & BUDDIES

YEAH BROWN BETTY

SQUEAK

DON'T BRING NUTTIN' BUT YOUR SWEET STUFF HOME TO ME

BUDDIES

DON'T MATTER IF SHE

HARPO

BIG LEGGED

BROWN EYED

BIG EYED

BROWN LEGGED

TWO BUDDIES

BIG LEGGED

BROWN EYED

BIG EYED

BROWN LEGGED

HARPO & BUDDIES

WHATEVER SHE IS
THAT GIRL SHO IS FINE
WHATEVER SHE IS
THAT GIRL SHO IS FINE

OL' MISTER / (G) MISTER

OUTSIDE BEDROOM DOOR

(HARPO passes OL' MISTER on his way up the stairs)



HARPO

What you doin' here, Grandpa?

OL' MISTER

I heard my fool son got his ho back. I come to see for myself.

(HARPO goes on down the steps...OL' MISTER starts in on MISTER)

OL' MISTER

Just couldn't rest til you got her in yo house, could you.

(CELIE comes out of the bedroom)

CELIE

Ol' Mister? You want a cool glass of water?

(inside the bedroom, SHUG is listening)

OL' MISTER

Just what is it about this Shug Avery, anyway? Even her Daddy say she easy. She ain't even clean. People say she got the nasty woman disease.

(CELIE spits into OL' MISTER's glass, twirls it around with her finger and then hands it to him...MISTER sees her but doesn't say anything)

MISTER

You ain't got it in you to understand. I love Shug Avery. Always have, always will. I should have married her when I had the chance.

OL' MISTER

Yeah, and throwed your life away.

MISTER

My life throwed away without her.

OL' MISTER

You married Shug Avery, she woulda took you off to Memphis and what woulda happened to my farmland, huh?

MISTER

Is that all you care about, yo farmland?

OL' MISTER

You'd care about this land too if you was born a slave on it, like I was. You'd know what it meant to own somethin'. You'd want to pass it on to yo kids, see it grow into somethin' better, see it prosper.

MISTER

(modest pride)

We doin' all right.

OL' MISTER

You think I raised you so you could do all right? You had chances I never had and look at you. Whole town's laughin'.

MISTER

We talkin' about Shug now? I thought we was talkin' about yo farm.

OL' MISTER

We talkin' about what's important here.

MISTER

To you.

OL' MISTER

To a man.

MISTER

To a man like you. Celie, hand Pa his hat.

(OL' MISTER realizes they're kicking him out)

OL' MISTER

All right, then.

(OL' MISTER finally drinks the water, hands the glass back to CELIE and leaves)

END

NETTIE/CELIE

(H)

ANOTHER DAY

(CELIE is outside hanging laundry...NETTIE runs on)



NETTIE

Celie!

CELIE

Nettie!

NETTIE

I thought I could get here last week, or the week before, but Pa always watchin' me. But I was on my way to school and...what's all this?

CELIE

Mister got four kids stead of three. And they all got colds, they got flu, they got diarrhea, they got pneumonia, they got worms, they hungry, and their hair ain't been comb since they mama died.

NETTIE

You find out how she die?

CELIE

Girl at church say she was foolin' around and got kilt by her boyfriend. But they don't blame her. They say Mister hardly even talk to her. Say he mainly just brought her here, drop her, and keep chasin' after Shug Avery.

(CELIE returns to folding laundry...NETTIE gets serious)

NETTIE

Celie, I can't live with Pa no more. He's always after me. You think Mister let me live here with you?

CELIE

I don't know.

(MISTER appears)

MISTER

What's goin' on here?

CELIE

Nettie need a place to stay.

MISTER

Well now. I always had room for Nettie.

(putting on his hat)

Maybe she can make my kids mind.

(then to CELIE)

And when you gon' sew some new clothes for these chirren? I shamed to be seen with 'em. Go into town and buy some cloth.

(he leaves)

NETTIE

I don't like how Mister treat you. It like you buried in that house.

CELIE

If I really buried it be better. I not have to work. But I finish most nights by ten. Then while he on top of me, I lay there, think bout you. Wonder if you safe.

NETTIE

Well, I wish I could stay and help you, but I got to get to school.

CELIE

It's OK. You go.

(NETTIE gets her schoolbooks)

NETTIE

But when I get back, I'm gonna read you a story while you sit in a chair.

CELIE

I got pies to make, but I like to be read to.

NETTIE

I love you.

END

CELIE / MISTER

(J)

~~(amused)~~

~~Thank you, Bobby.~~

(he tips his hat and leaves...MISTER
appears...he is cleaned up and looking quite
honorable and new)



MISTER

How you doin', Celie?

CELIE

I'm fine.

MISTER

I am too. I feel like this the first time I ever live on Earth
as a useful man. I see things. Wonder 'bout stuff.

CELIE

What you wonder about?

MISTER

Why us black? Why us men and women? Why us here in the first
place?

CELIE

And what you think.

MISTER

I think us here to wonder. And while us wonder about the big
things, us learn the little ones kinda by accident. And the more
us wonder, the more us love.

CELIE

(a moment)

You wanna sit down?

MISTER

I would. Thank you. I brought something to show you.

(he hands her a big sea shell)

MISTER

I never seen the ocean but I love shells. I ordered this one
from a book. You hold this up to yo ear, you hear the ocean.

(she puts it up to her ear)

MISTER

You love anything special?

CELIE

Birds, I guess.

MISTER

You used to remind me of a bird, way back when you come to live with me. You was so skinny, the least little thing happen, you look about to fly away.

CELIE

You saw that?

MISTER

I saw it. I just too big a fool to let myself care.

CELIE

Well. Us lived through it.

MISTER

I know you hate me for keepin' Nettie letters.

CELIE

I don't hate you, Albert. I see all these things you're doin' for people now. Buildin' things for the school, helpin' Sofia and Harpo with the kids.

(a moment)

And the other thing...we both loved Shug. What you love best about her?

MISTER

Her style. She upright and honest. Speak her mind...like Sofia.

(a moment)

I'm real sorry she left you. I remember how I felt when she left me.

CELIE

It all right. Somebody leave my life, somebody else come. I know that now.

MISTER

Celie. I want you to marry me. For real this time, not just in the flesh but in the spirit too. Will you marry me?

(CELIE takes a minute)

CELIE

Let's just us be friends.

MISTER

All right, then.

END

~~*(SOFIA and HARPO come onstage now with the rest of the GUESTS)*~~

SOFIA

Come on, y'all. Let's get this party started.

~~*(SQUEAK and GRADY come on)*~~

MISTER

~~There's Grady and Squeak. They didn't know if they'd make it.~~

~~*(SHUG appears now)*~~

CELIE

~~And look at this. Did you know she was comin'?~~

MISTER

~~I knew she was in town.~~

CELIE

~~She's lookin' good.~~

MISTER

~~Real good.~~

~~*(SHUG approaches now)*~~

CELIE

~~How you doin'?~~

SHUG

~~I missed you more than I miss my Mama.~~

CELIE / SHUG
(K)

IN THE YARD AT SHUG'S HOUSE

(SHUG and CELIE walk outside after eating Chinese food)

➔

CELIE

These wontons so good it's almost enough to make me want to go to China. I'm gon' explode I ate so many.

SHUG

Which fortune you want?

CELIE

This one.

(picks one and opens it)

Because you are who you are, your future is gon' be happy and bright.

SHUG

That's good.

CELIE

(gives the other one to SHUG)

Now you.

(SHUG opens hers but doesn't read)

Well? What it say?

SHUG

It say I got the hots for a boy of nineteen.

CELIE

(laughs, reaching for it)

Let me see.

SHUG

No. I'm tryin' to tell you.

CELIE

Tell me what?

SHUG

I hired a new man to play with the band. I almost didn't cause the only thing he play is the flute. But it turn out that blues

SHUG (CONT'D)

flute is the one thing blues music been lacking and the minute I heard Germaine play I knew this for a fact.

CELIE

Germaine.

SHUG

Yeah, I don't know who give him that flittish name, but it suit him. He's little. He's cute. Got nice buns and honey brown curly hair...

CELIE

You killin' me, Shug.

SHUG

I'm sorry Celie. I been dyin' to tell somebody...only you the somebody I usually tell.

CELIE

I don't want to know this.

SHUG

But you never cared about Albert, or Grady even. And I never cared when Grady took off with Squeak.

CELIE

This different.

SHUG

I still love you, Celie...I always will...But I'm getting old. Nobody think I'm good looking no more, but you. Or so I thought. He's nineteen. A boy. How long can it last? Six months?

CELIE

He a man.

SHUG

I know that. And I know better than to take any of them seriously, but some mens can be a lot of fun.

CELIE

But I love you.

SHUG

All I ask is six months to have my last fling.

END

CELIE / SHUG

①

SHUG

Grady drive it like a crazy man.

GRADY

Yeah yeah yeah, drove all night long.

CELIE

Y'all want some ice tea

SHUG

Miss Celie. Us two married ladies now. And hungry. Grady. Go make us some eggs and onions. I need to stretch my legs. Celie and I got some catching up to do.

MISTER

(to GRADY)

I'm gon' have some corn liquor if you want some.

~~(MISTER and GRADY exit)~~

SHUG

→ You got you a new hat for Easter?

CELIE

No.

SHUG

You find any more letters from Nettie? How they doin' over there in Africa?

(CELIE doesn't respond)

SHUG

I never seen you like this, Celie. You not excited about Easter?

CELIE

Easter mean nuthin' to me. I prayed to God my whole life and what he done. Nuthin'. My Nettie lost in Africa. Sofia nearly dead. Mister nuthin' but...

SHUG

Celie, you better hush. God might hear you.

CELIE

Let 'im hear me. If God ever listened to a poor colored woman, the world would be a different place.

SHUG

God takin' his time getting around to you, I'll admit. But look at all he give us--laughin', and singin' and sex.

(laughs)

Sky over our heads, birds singin' to us. I think it piss God off if anybody even walk by the color purple in a field and not notice it. He say...look what I made for you.

CELIE

God forgot about me!

SHUG

Celie!

CELIE

God just another man, far as I'm concerned...triflin'... lowdown...

SHUG

No, Celie. God not some gloomy old man like the pictures you've seen of him. God not a man at all.

END

(SHUG begins singing...easily...like these are just her thoughts with a little music underneath)

#22 THE COLOR PURPLE--SHUG

SHUG

GOD IS INSIDE YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE
THAT WAS OR EVER WILL BE
WE COME INTO THIS WORLD WITH GOD
BUT ONLY THEM WHO LOOK INSIDE FIND IT

GOD IS THE FLOWERS AND EVERYTHING ELSE
THAT WAS OR EVER WILL BE
AND WHEN YOU FEEL THE TRUTH SO REAL
AND WHEN YOU LOVE THE WAY YOU FEEL
YOU'VE FOUND IT