
Written by Sara Kumar

ELIJAH

I ain't budgin!

KETCH

Get on off da bridge, man!

ELIJAH

I ain't budgin.

KETCH

We found ya note on da door of da inn, and I came,
and the other one stayed ther. You needs to hep me, hep you!

ELIJAH

I hear something, bad.

KETCH

I hear something good. I hear something good.
What you hearin?

ELIJAH

I hear something real bad.

KETCH

What it sayin?

ELIJAH

It sayin, I needs to jump, in da water,
cause I can't make it here no more.

KETCH

Come and tawk to me.

*(Mary comes in wid breakfast 'o chicken wid waffles and cream,
from da downstairs kitchen, where Dolly lives, when she come sometime.
Mary places it awn da desk, and Eliza says a prayer and begins eating.
Elijah took awhile to come down, but eventually he does,
but he begins shivering cause he scared, so Ketch says a prayer.
Mary leave stageright, cause she hear a bird call.)*

ELIJAH

I ain't neva gonna make it, sa. I ain't neva gona make it, sa.

KETCH

Ain't you need to call me dat. I yer friend. I yer friend.
I needs ya to move from da bridge der.
Dis ain't a tall bridge. You ain't gonna die. But you causin a scene.

ELIJAH

I ain't gonna die?

KETCH

Naw, you jus gonna get brused bad. I ain't gonna tell ya, you needs to come down here.

ELIJAH

Why's you comin'?

KETCH

I ain't takin no fer an answer. You can't swim, ca ya?

ELIJAH

I can't swim. I can't do nothin good, cause I hear bad things.

KETCH

I har something good. I hear trees shining. You her da trees dis shining?

ELIJAH

I har no tree, I har no tree.

KETCH

Come down here, let me tell you about yer hair.

ELIJAH

My hair?

KETCH

I needs to see yer hair here.

Come on under this cave, I show ya.

Fix it right, naw, fix it right.

ELIJAH

I comin down den.

KETCH

I come on down, wid ya.

ELIJAH

I needs hep, I don't got a guud, step on it.

KETCH

Come on down here. Can't ya eat guud?

ELIJAH

I needs to tawk about ma hair.

KETCH

You needs a real mat, fer yer hair. I get you one, so it stay in good.

I needs to get you a mat. You gonna need it, real guud.

ELIJAH

I don't own, no mat.

KETCH

You sit awhile, and I tawk to ya guud. You doin fine now. I hep ya wid ya hair.

ELIJAH

I needs guud pie. I like strawberry rubba.

KETCH

I's neva heard of dat. But ya go'on an sho me sometime. Where you at?

ELIJAH

I at da tailorin shop.

KETCH

I ain't neva been der. I think, you gawta guud name, son.

ELIJAH

I'm Elijah.

KETCH

I'm Ketch. Don't got no otha name.

I been around, comin up from Mississippi, where I been fightin.

ELIJAH

I needs to fight!

KETCH

I don't think you knows what dat means, son.

ELIJAH

I ain't dat ounge. I ain't dat young. I needs ma note.

(And Ketch says a prayer, and gives Elijah a letter note, wid handwriting awn it.)

KETCH

Why you put it on da door, of da Inn?

ELIJAH

I needs to put it somewhere dey can FIND IT!

KETCH

Dey can find it at home, not at da inn, dey fightin all round.

I heard a bomb go off in da church.

ELIJAH

I werk fer Ge'rl Robert E. Lee, an I'm a real fighter!

(And Eliza drinks some water and stands to see if she full, and she misses Mary.

So, Eliza sit back down, slowly, and she hears another bird call.)

KETCH

I knows, who you tawkin about. Naw, don't go tawkin big on me.
You ain't old yet. You can't be fightin.

ELIJAH

I needs to fight!

KETCH

You gonna end up in da prison, son. Not too far, I seen it.
Dey a drunk man in der, yellin something bad.

ELIJAH

I needs to go home. I needs some strawberry rubba.

KETCH

I needs ya to tawk more about yer fightin. You really wid da Southern army?

(Elijah hits Ketch in da left eye, and Ketch fall down real bad.

The boy begins to cry, with love,

and an angel come to pray, naw, and Ketch sit down on a stump, fer awhile.

Eliza decides she eaten well, and she sit wid her head down fer awhile,

on da desk, on a cushion.)

KETCH

Dey not dat bad. I slowin down, wid ya.
I not dat guud, yet. I had a fall, and I slowin down, wid ya.

Hep me up.

*(And Elijah puts a hand in der air, but he was shaking badly,
and Ketch needs a hand,
to get up, real slow, so he sets on da tree stump still,
and they both hear birds calling.)*

I sit ha. I sit ha. I sit ha.

*(And dey sit in silence for a minute. Elijah sits too and cries a little bit,
while Ketch prays that he can stand up without falling.
Elijah walks and jabs. Ketch remains sitting, and he doesn't worry none.
Eliza lifts her head from the desk, and then she walks to the window.)*

ELIJAH

I needs a hand. I ain't guud.

KETCH

I needs a hand too. I ain't dat guud, right naw.

ELIJAH

You needs to tawk more, it make me betta.

KETCH

I tawk wid ya. But ya gawta be honest, while I sit some.

You a real fighter?

ELIJAH

I be a soldier fer Gen'rl Robert E. Lee!

KETCH

I needs no trouble. I just sit here.

I been har befo. I jus set, till it flow guud.

ELIJAH

I needs strawberry rubba!

KETCH

You sit down naw! You sit down naw! You sit down naw!

(Elijah walks and jabs and Ketch prays again, while he sitting.

Mary comes and the lights go down on da house in Greeneville,

and Mary helped Eliza lie down in her bed chair,

and she sat down and slept awhile, by Eliza's side.)

ELIJAH

What? You kill a man before?

(And the man who was no longer a slave, and who called himself, Ketch,

dodged punches, from Elijah, wid his hand.)

KETCH

I point an shoot, like dey say to. Dey was shootin back.

*(Ketch shows Elijah his leg and the scar. Somethin happen inside,
and Elijah need to cry differently again, wid love.
Elijah sets down and puts his hand on his own leg.)*

ELIJAH

White men?

KETCH

Dey look da same from far, but dey white. One got ma, in da leg.

(Ketch wait for a little longer, and den he can breathe better.)

ELIJAH

It burn somethin bad?

(Ketch prays again.)

KETCH *(Slowly, and he heals as he speaks)*

It burn like wet fire. Da blood kep comin, das what scare me. Kep draggin myself till I find a tree to hide behind. Dem leaves turn red, an I says to myself, I wish I was jus one of dem trees or dem leaves, and rooted down der, under da brown and green. I ain't da kind da run, but I had to go an ma legs dead, and feet dead, and ma eye was closing, on ma right. An ain't no light den. And it burnin, bad.

(And Elijah rubbed his knee softly, while Ketch waited awhile.)

KETCH *(Slowly, and he heals as he speaks)*

And I kep still, tryin be dead, and it worked too cause I's so still, an I felt da root on ma head so a slep. And I tell ya, dey's angels on battlefields cause I heard one say jus wait I been prayin. And da root don't hurt ma head. An I felt blood on da inside, warm. And I lif ma head

(And Ketch stands up wid his whole person, naw.)

KETCH

and see an angel, black like me, and he touch me and don't says no word. Den wada all round ma leg. And I walkin now, but see here. I ain't lyin none.

(Ketch is standing, while Elijah sits lovingly, with a dropped jaw.)

ELIJAH

I ain't disbelivin ya, cousin.

KETCH

I need to find somethin. Somethin like a sound like dat angel.

ELIJAH

What it sound like?

KETCH

It be bells dat ring.

*(Elijah walks slowly, wid a step dat match Ketch, so he can help him,
and Ketch realize der a battle goin on in town. So dey walk in silence along da creek,
ta Andy's tailorin shop, and dey see a blue suit outside da door.)*

KETCH

Who here?

ELIJAH

How you know, where ta go?

(Elijah walks up and down da shop, and he see no one der.)

KETCH

I follow the Holy Spirit leadin me ha. He do dat sometime. I seen wada, so I follow till I reach somewhere guud. I'm building a boat, and I needs to follow da wind sometime.

ELIJAH

I needs to werk on something. I needs to build a boat, cousin.

KETCH

I needs werk too. I needs to build a guud boat.

ELIJAH

I needs to werk on a guud boat, cousin.

KETCH

We g'n an see what to do.

ELIJAH

Der be my soldier in der. He tell me things to do.

*(Dolly open da door and see dem der.
And da lights are still down in Eliza's bedroom.)*

KETCH

I neva hurt ha non. I neva hur no one ha.

DOLLY

I needs to werk guud. I heard ya! I needs to build a boat. I heard ya!

KETCH

I needs to werk. I needs to be building, a church.

(Ketch takes the suit down from da door.)

DOLLY

I needs to get up and down her and see, what I can see. Where Elijah be?

ELIJAH

I har, cousin. I needs a hair mat, really guud.

DOLLY

I needs a hair mat, too. I needs a lot of things, I don't gawt yet. I think we needs to werk a lot, and I think we needs to werk on gettin safe in ha. Der a war goins ons. Ain't ya harin well?

ELIJAH

I har jus fine. I har jus fine. An I sayin, we jus needs ta get goin, to be were we needs to be.

DOLLY

Wh what you sayin?

ELIJAH

Cousin, he needs to be werkin on a boat, he say.

DOLLY

I needs to know what we doin, Elijah. I needs to be wid, a guud person.

KETCH

You got children, Miss?

(Ketch hangs the suit back up awn da door.)

DOLLY

I be a slave ta Andrew Johnson. We's gonna be freein da slaves soon. I been freed, but I needs to tell ya, I ain't free yet. But I needs to be real awnest, I need to werk wid someone guud. So der ya go. Who are you?

KETCH

I'm Ketch. Ain't got no otha name. I'm free as a bird on a wire, but I's safe. I ain't got none of does problems dat gonna cause no problem.

DOLLY

What you sayin? I have two children, two girls. You don'ts needs to know wm. He been sold ta ma friend, but he gonna be free one day.

I's got three children, an you ain't da kind to call children bad tings here. I ain't a bad person. I's a guud person. I lost ma husband from a cancer 'o the head, and he dead.

KETCH

I ain't sayin dat bad, Dolly. I sayin, yu guud. But don't ya see, I been dad way with your son. He yer son, right?

ELIJAH

I ain't gawt a dad, he been los to us. My ma too. I gots cousins ha.

DOLLY

I have a son. He been sold, and I heartbroke if I awnest, and I gawt ta get him back, Mr. Ketch. I gots a cousin son, an he's gawt a prolem. But he ain't da kind ta foil to ya. He don't want to get in no trouble. He jus fine at home.

KETCH

Naw, naw, I know, he ain't fine. He gawt a real problem. He herin something bad. Dad's what he told me. He harin something bad. But naw, he okay, cause I saved dis boy.

DOLLY

I ain't dad bad wid 'em. He okay naw, some people ain't gonna understan how it is, be locked up where dey soldiers, awl kins, tryin to werk something bad. I gawt a wall in da livin room, dey drawin messages awl ova da wall. He lookin at da wall, and he saying I wid Gen'ral Robert E. Lee, so if he say dat, he not well.

KETCH

I needs to sit down. I ain't well, naw. Lemme sit right ha, on dis tree trunk. I be fine. I won't be bad wid ya. I needs to tell ya. I am a guud man, Ms. Dolly. I needs to sleep.

ELIJAH

I ain't a bad man, cousin. I needs to build something good, he say. Dis man and ma cousin, really guud.

KETCH

I needs to sleep, and rest, and den I'll tell ya. Jus on dis trunk, I sit and rest.

*(And da Angel of Greeneville come and touch Ketch's head, lovingly,
and say a prayer.
Da angel wears bells on da feet with sound.
The lights go up in Eliza's room,
and she is dressed in new clothes and is sitting in her chair again.
Her blanket is off her, so Mary covers her, lovingly.)*

End of Act 1, Scene 4.