

The Diviners - Melvin Wilder and Darlene Henshaw (p.47-48)

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JENNIE MAE. I'm awful tired, Darlene.

DARLENE. Well you don't have to be so darn prissy about it.

JENNIE MAE. (*Exiting back into the house.*) I been up half the night.

(*MELVIN and DEWEY enter. DARLENE turns and imitates her friend's words to them in Scarlet O'Hara style:*)

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DARLENE. "I been up half the night." She just got eyes for the preacher.

DEWEY. Jennie Mae likes the preacher?

DARLENE. Listen, Dewey, she doesn't just like him—she likes him. But don't tell her I told you, okay?

MELVIN. What, do you think Dewey here can't keep a secret, Darlene? You think Dewey's gonna go blabbin all over?

DEWEY. I won't tell her, Darlene.

MELVIN. (*Hands him a flask.*) Have a drink, Dew.

DEWEY. Alright.

DARLENE. Ain't you guys never heard a the Dry-Laws?

MELVIN. Darlene, you're talkin to a veteran a the Army a the U.S. of A. and I'm tellin you the Dry-Laws mean next to nothin. I mean a drink's just a drink, huh? Give her the hootch, Dew.

DARLENE. I'm not touchin that hootch.

MELVIN. (*Challenging.*) What're you scared of a drink?

DARLENE. (*Takes the bottle.*) I ain't scared a nothin.

(*MELVIN pulls DEWEY aside as she drinks.*)

MELVIN. Now, you see how that is, Dew? Girls're tricky business. Real tricky business. But you gotta let

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em know how you stand, see? Now you want a take this girl dancin. You want to take Darlene to the dance.

DEWEY. I'm not sayin I love her or nothin.

MELVIN. But you gotta let her know what you're thinkin.

DARLENE. Hey, Melvin?

MELVIN. We're tryin to talk man to man. You understand?

DARLENE. What're you talkin about Melvin?

MELVIN. We're talkin on how nice you're lookin, Darlene. My pal Dewey, he can't hardly stand it. Now you see how that is, Dew?

DARLENE. You really think I look nice, Dewey?

MELVIN. Tell her how it is, pal. Tell her you mean business.

(*DEWEY crosses to DARLENE, very shy:*)

DEWEY. Hey, Darlene.

DARLENE. Hey, Dewey.

DEWEY. I don't love you or nothin.

MELVIN. Dewey, what're you sayin?! That's not what he's meaning, Darlene.

DARLENE. (*A little upset.*) Well what are you meanin?

DEWEY. I guess I'm kind a wonderin what you might think about dancin.

DARLENE. (*Warming.*) I like dancin just fine.

DEWEY. Me too. I don't know how or nothin but I sure like to watch.

MELVIN. This guy puts the dance floor to shame.

DARLENE. Maybe you could teach me a step or two, Dewey.

MELVIN. (*Referring to DEWEY.*) Hell of a dancer.

DEWEY. Well, my feet're kind a sore. I got planters warts, see?

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