

(Dining room. Evening meal is finished. Brother Isaac and Sisters get up from tables. Brother Isaac exits. Sisters clear tables.)

AURELIA
Clara, tell Eva about the time you ran away.

CLARA
I ran away.

AURELIA
And . . .

CLARA
I upset everyone.

ANNIE
Especially Aurelia.

AURELIA
I was distraught. I cried for days.

ANNIE
Two days. Two days it was.

AURELIA
Tell her the funny part. Tell her where you hid.

CLARA
In a coffin. In the shop. I didn't know where to go.

AURELIA
One of the sisters, it was . .

RUTH
Me.

AURELIA
Yea. Sister Ruth, went into the shop and heard rustling coming from one of the coffins.

RUTH
I thought it was a spirit come to tell of the other world.

CLARA

She started talking to the coffin.

ANNIE

Ruth will talk to anything.

CLARA

I knew I'd been found out so I opened the lid and . . .

RUTH

I fainted!

CLARA

I'd never seen anyone faint. I thought she was dead!

AURELIA

Clara came running to the house screaming, "I killed Sister Ruth! I killed Sister Ruth!"

ANNIE

Ruth was running behind her. Her skirts hiked up to her knees.

AURELIA

They were a sight.

CLARA

Yea.

AURELIA

That was quite a day! Why did you run away Clara?

CLARA

Lace. I wanted to see lace.

AURELIA

Oh yea. Lace. Vanity. Clara has always had trouble with rules.

EVA

Why?

AURELIA

It's a nature, I suppose.

EVA

Like mine. (Pause) I done killed your Brother Calvin.

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AURELIA
Nay child.

EVA
He's as good as dead. And I done did it.

AURELIA
Nay.

EVA
I told you I was no good. You don't listen.

AURELIA
Child, it was an accident.

EVA
You say God loves me. I done killed two people now.

AURELIA
Child.

EVA
That's why I was alooking for the devil. To get where I belong afore I messed anybody else up. To get there--be there--

AURELIA
But you didn't find Old Ugly. You found us.

EVA
Why?

AURELIA
It's not for me to question. Here you are.

EVA
Why?

AURELIA
I don't know child. I live a life of faith.

(James enters dining area.)

JAMES
Brother Calvin has made the transition.

EVA

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He what?

(Singer/Angels ring bell.)

RUTH SINGS "I WILL BOW AND BE SIMPLE":

I will bow and be simple

ANNIE JOINS IN:

I will bow and be free

I will bow and be humble

AURELIA JOINS IN:

Yea bow like the willow tree

(Brothers enter.)

I will bow this is a token

BROTHERS JOIN SONG:

I will wear the easy yoke,

I will bow and be broken

Yea I'll fall upon the rock.

CLARA (Softly)

Nay

Nay

Nay

CLARA

Nay. Nay. Nay.

EVA

He's dead?