

KING - START

MAHALIA. Tell 'em 'bout the dream, honey!

KING. *(He looks over at MAHALIA then puts away his paper and speaks from his heart.)* I say to you today, my friends, that even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I have a dream. *(moves downstage center to audience)* I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of it's creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day, on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream! I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. And this will be the day when all God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring." So let freedom ring. And all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of that old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

(KING returns to podium as the crowd is applauding wildly. The lights change. MILDRED goes to piano and starts playing a very slow version of "Kum Ba Yah." Actor returns chairs from platform and replaces podium to downstage left limbo and exits left.)

MAHALIA. *(moving downstage)* Then, just as quietly as they had come, the great crowd began to steal away. The last songs died away. And we left as we had come, with peace and goodwill toward all. *(music out)* But Satan gets mad when you try to do good and his hatred drove the sweetness out of the land. Good will died and peace fled down the road as the apostles of violence had their innings. Assassinations, riots, troubles.

MAHALIA. *(cont.)* White power! Black power! Everybody forgetting God power.

(MILDRED slowly and softly plays Gonna Sing About Martin as MAHALIA crosses to stage right limbo and reads from her Bible.)

And the Lord God appeared in a pillar of a cloud. And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people shall forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Therefore, write ye this song and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths that this song may be a witness for me. Moses, therefore, wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.

KING. *(at podium, stage left limbo)* The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked.

MAHALIA. Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak.

KING. And His soul hates him that loves violence.

MAHALIA. Hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

KING. The solution to the problems of this world...is love.

MAHALIA. My doctrine shall drop as the rain.

KING. The great unifying force of life...is love.

MAHALIA. My speech shall distil as the dew.

KING. The highest good...is love.

MAHALIA. And I will publish the name of the Lord.

KING. God...is love.

MAHALIA. Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

KING & MAHALIA. *(together)* He is the rock.

MAHALIA. His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment.

KING. Now the judgment of God is upon us.

MAHALIA. A God of truth.

KING. We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters.

MAHALIA. Just and right is God.

KING. Or we are going to perish together as fools.

MAHALIA. O that ye were wise, that ye understood this.

KING. We must learn to love.

MAHALIA. And Moses spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people. *(music out.)*

KING. I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead, here in Memphis.

MAHALIA. And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day saying, get thee up into mount Nebo.

KING. But it really doesn't matter with me now...

MAHALIA. And the Lord showed him the land of Canaan.

KING. ...because I've been to the mountaintop.

MAHALIA. And the Lord said unto him, behold. This is the land I have promised unto the children of Israel.

KING. And I've looked over Jordan. And I've seen the Promised Land.

MAHALIA. But thou shalt not go over thither...

KING. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know, we as a people will get to the Promised Land.

MAHALIA. For thou shalt be gathered unto thy forefathers.

KING. And I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. *(looking up, hands extended)* Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

MAHALIA. And Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab,

(The light on KING fades and goes out.)

according to the word of the Lord.

(Actor exits left with podium. MAHALIA crosses to center and sings Deep River.)

DEEP RIVER, MY HOME IS OVER JORDAN.

DEEP RIVER, LORD,

I WANT TO CROSS OVER INTO CAMPGROUND.

DEEP RIVER, MY HOME IS OVER JORDAN.

DEEP RIVER, LORD,

I WANT TO CROSS OVER INTO CAMPGROUND.

OH DON'T YOU WANT TO GO TO THE GOSPEL FEAST,

(She falls to her knees.)

KING - END

THAT PROMISED LAND WHERE ALL IS PEACE?

DEEP RIVER, LORD,

I WANT TO CROSS OVER INTO CAMPGROUND.

MAHALIA. *(cont.)* And there arose not a prophet since like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.

(Center lights fade. There is a slow transition as the cyc lights go from near dark to bright blue.)

(All lights come up full. It's Sunday night church at Greater Salem.)

You all come back over to Greater Salem next Sunday night and let Halie cook you some of her fine New Orleans gumbo! We going have a time, a good time, a marvelous time in the Lord. And we going raise a little money for the Baptist Missionary School. Now babies, this going be a silent offering! That mean all that money you got that make noise you just keep and you bring Halie those nice quiet bills. Ha!

(The congregation continues to respond during the following build-up. FRANCIS is singing and playing "response" on organ, MILDRED on piano.)

Lord have mercy! I'm feelin' goood! Now, everybody know Mildred here and Blind Francis.

(They give a little wave and the congregation starts to applaud. MAHALIA holds up hands in protest.)

Noo, no. We not here tonight for form and fashion or some outside show of this world. No, we here for church.

FRANCIS. Let the church roll on!

MAHALIA. And when I say church, I mean lowdown *chu'ch!* Ain't that right, Francis?

FRANCIS. Sister, you know the church my fillin' station! And I'm looking to be filled with the Holy Ghost tonight! He hee.

MAHALIA. Hallelujah! Now beloveds, I ain't got nothing new for you this evening. Same old Mahalia Jackson, same old Jesus.

MILDRED. That's all right.