

*He does, and she does, and they begin to chew.*

Sit down.

*He crouches to the ground.*

Not there, next to me. There's room next to me.

JOSHUA. If Mama wakes up and finds me gone, she'll beat me.

LILY. If your mama wakes up and finds you gone, you say you went to the outhouse, that's all.

JOSHUA. Why're we here? The ground is cool and wet. My feet are wet.

LILY. It's called "doo."

JOSHUA. I know what it's called. Why'dja wanna meet?

LILY. I wanted to see you.

JOSHUA. How'd you get out?

LILY. I sneaked out. Mama's asleep, Daddy's workin' late.

JOSHUA. At Demopolis Cotton? Why's he workin' so late?

LILY. Shush. Mama said he was at a meetin'. Takin' care of business.

*She strikes a thick kitchen match.*

JOSHUA. What're you doin'? You crazy?

LILY. I wanted to see your face, but I couldn't find a candle.

JOSHUA. So you're playin' with matches? Someone'll see the light out here.

LILY. No one'll see. We're behind the trees. Hello, Rabbit.

JOSHUA. *(Uneasily)* Hello.

*He blows out the match.*

LILY. Don'tcha think my hair looks pretty? Girls at school pull my hair and call me "poor little rich girl." They say cotton's dead, but they're jealous. I don't need them. OK, gimme your gum.

JOSHUA. What?

LILY. Your gum, spit it out.

*She holds out her hand. They each spit their gum into her hand. She discards the gum.*

I like being here with you at night. I want to share something secret with you.

JOSHUA. What is it?

LILY. Close your eyes.

JOSHUA. Why?

LILY. Just do it.

*He does. She leans over and kisses him on the cheek.*

JOSHUA. *(Flinching, eyes open.)* What're you doin'?

LILY. That was a kiss.

JOSHUA. I know. Why'd you do it?

LILY. I wanted to. For a long time I wanted to. Don't you want to? Now that we're older...

JOSHUA. We're only twelve—next month.

LILY. Don't you want to?

*She leans in to kiss him on the mouth. He kisses her back. Sweet. Innocent. Suddenly, noise, light, commotion. Her father, perhaps voiced by Garth, calls out her name.*

JOSHUA. *(Alarmed. Pulling away.)* Someone's coming!

LILY. It's Daddy!

*They freeze. Begin Scene 5D, at Capitol hearing.*

HIGGINS. Are you familiar with the *Montgomery Home News*?

EMILY. I know of it, I am not familiar with it.

*Lily and Joshua snap into the present, as adults.*

LILY. I don't remember that. I would have remembered that.

HIGGINS. *(Genial.)* But you know that it's a publication here in Montgomery. You do know that.

EMILY. Indeed.

HIGGINS. A clipping from that publication was sent to me. The clipping is about a book, called *The Rabbits' Wedding*. Do you know the book?

EMILY. The book has come to my attention recently, yes.

HIGGINS. But you didn't know the book before "recently"?

EMILY. Not intimately.

HIGGINS. And why has it come to your attention recently?

EMILY. I gather there has been some concern about the content of the book.

HIGGINS. I have read the clipping and understand the concern. Particularly since the book is in the children's section of our libraries.

EMILY. Well, it *is* a children's book.

HIGGINS. A children's book with some very grown-up ideas in it. Have you read it?

EMILY. I have.

HIGGINS. What's your memory of it?

EMILY. I like the book—

HIGGINS. Not your opinion, I mean your memory of the story.

EMILY. Well, two rabbits who have spent much time together frolicking in the woods, decide to marry each other. They do so in the company of other friendly creatures, on a moonlit night, in a meadow on the edge of a forest.

HIGGINS. You forgot a significant element.

EMILY. They live happily ever after—?

HIGGINS. (*Exasperated, opening the book.*) I am referring to the first sentence of the story: "Two little rabbits, a white rabbit and a black rabbit, lived in a large forest..." What does that say to you?

EMILY. I think we ought to ask children aged three-to-seven-years-old. They are the intended audience.

HIGGINS. Miss Reed, my bad ear isn't so bad that I don't hear the *vox populi*. It says that this book is a vehicle to promote integration. To our youth. To our impressionable youth. Our "three-to-seven-year-olds"! The state House has heard about this book, the state Senate has heard about this book. The people do not like this book.

EMILY. The *Montgomery Home News* does not like this book.

HIGGINS. And the *Montgomery Home News* represents many people.

EMILY. The paper represents members of the White Citizens Council.

HIGGINS. And members of the White Citizens Council are residents of the state of Alabama, Miss Reed. Bawn n' bred. And although things

may be different in Indiana, we have our ways—people stay with their own kind.

EMILY. What would you like me to do, Senator?

HIGGINS. I think it would be prudent for The State Librarian of Alabama to pull this book from the shelves of the Alabama Public Library Service. And she should recommend that her librarians around the state do the same.

EMILY. I will not do that.

*Begin Scene 5E, in the park.*

LILY. No, no, no. I don't remember that.

JOSHUA. Lily, how could you forget?

EMILY. I cannot imagine encouraging the suppression of this lovely little children's book. Have you looked at the illustrations, sir? Have you noted the detail?

JOSHUA. You kissed me and I kissed you back, and your daddy found us, and there was hell to pay.

LILY. No. Not so.

EMILY. Garth Williams is one of our finest illustrators—he did the artwork for *Little House on the Prairie*, *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte's Web*—recognized modern classics.

HIGGINS. I don't know who this Garth Williams is, but he is not welcome in Alabama, with his message of black marrying white.

JOSHUA. He dragged me, Lily, dragged me across them—*those*—herbaceous borders, toward the lamplight of The Big House. You screamed and I cried and Mama come—*came*—running from our shack, and your mother ran out of The Big House in her nightgown. And your father shouted, "Never, never, *never!*"

LILY. No, no, no! Never did—

JOSHUA. Your daddy told you two to get in the house and close the door. I swear I thought he was gonna kill me.

LILY. Never did—

JOSHUA. Mama came between me and your daddy, and I thought he was gonna kill her, too. But she stood there, toe to toe with him at the lamppost and said, "After I wash the blood off my boy's face,