

ELOISE — SIDE ONE

MARTIN goes to the door. It's ELOISE.

Yes?
MARTIN

Evening, Mr. Moore.
ELOISE

Mr. Moore is my father, darling, please. Martin's just fine.
MARTIN

Yes, sir. Mr. Pell sent me to tell you that we're a half-hour from curtain, is all.
ELOISE

Half-hour. Got it. Thank ya.
MARTIN

Yes, sir.
ELOISE

She is about to leave.

Say.
MARTIN

Sir?
ELOISE

You know this fella?
MARTIN, *indicating LANE*

I don't believe I do, sir.
ELOISE

This right here—
MARTIN

LANE

I'm William.

ELOISE

Pleasure to make / your—

MARTIN

Aht, aht, aht! He's being modest. Which seems to be his specialty. This right here, Miss...

ELOISE

Eloise, sir.

MARTIN

Eloise. Is the best dancer you will ever lay eyes upon so long as you live.

LANE

Martin, c'mon now.

MARTIN

They call him Master Juba. And don't ask me what that means—because I've asked him and he's tried to explain it to me, and I can make neither heads nor tails of it, but that doesn't matter, because the things this boy can do, Eloise, transcend any and all language.

LANE

Marty, don't bore the poor girl.

ELOISE

Oh, it's no trouble.

MARTIN

You're damn right it's no trouble. He's the king! About four years ago—I don't know if you heard—we danced for the Queen of England. It was pleasant. It was lovely, really. And she *was* a queen. But this. This right here is a king!

LANE

Martin, maybe some water?

ELOISE

Do you need some water, Mr. Moore?

MARTIN

I'm fine, darling! And please. Please. Just Martin. Anyway. I'm telling you. One of these days, you have *got* to see this boy dance. It's like watching a strike of lightning. I'm serious.

LANE

He's being theatrical.

MARTIN

He beat Johnny Diamond, you know. The idiot challenged him to more dance battles than you could count and Master Juba beat him at every single one. How 'bout that?

LANE

Okay, Marty.

ELOISE

I'd love to watch the show, sir, but unfortunately I've got to stay and clean 'til just about eleven or so.

MARTIN

Eleven?!

ELOISE

Yes, sir.

MARTIN

Christ. And here I was thinking the whole point of being in the North was that there *wasn't* slavery.

Beat.

MARTIN

Well. One of these nights—how many nights are we here, Willie?

LANE

Three.

MARTIN

Three nights. One of these nights, you tell Mr. Pell that Martin Moore said he'd pay him back plus interest for the work you miss while watching the show. I won't debate it. You tell him I said that it's simply criminal for anyone, when under the very same roof, to miss the chance to watch Master Juba jump Jim Crow.

LANE

Mart. Enough.

MARTIN

Can I not sing my friend's praises?

LANE

You have, and then some. Thank you. And thank you, Eloise. We should be getting ready now.

ELOISE

Yes, sir. Is there anything else / I can—

LANE

We're fine.

ELOISE

Yes, sir.

She exits.