

Chap. 9

next draft

Summer passed slowly and by winter ~~she~~ ^{Lola} knew she was pregnant. Again Mattie told her, looking at her swollen stomach, "bout three months gone", she said accusingly. Zeke's dwindling homecomings had produced another offspring. He had lost his interest in the new addition to his life and more and more had been seeing Juzabel and other girls who appreciated his charms. Lola was aware of this because her mother-in-law had told her in no uncertain terms that "her man was bedding other women", as if to make her feel guilty. Lola felt nothing at all. Her body as well as her mind was completely unresponsive. Lola's second born child arrived in June. Mattie had taken the little boy to her home to be tended by Lola's sisters until the birthing had been completed. Again she, neat and ready, was in assistance. It was even more than the first a living hell for Lola. She screamed and thrashed, ignoring Mattie's protests to "hesh up and push." [The life giving process can be beautiful or horrendous depending upon the circumstances of life involved and the excruciating pain of childbirth had the definite power to change a woman from one extreme to another. The subservient Lola's circumstances were diffinitely not beautiful; a jealous, cheating husband who made her feel unloved, a domineering mother-in-law, a prison with invisible barriers, estrangement from those things she enjoyed most and total lack of fulfillment and utter poverty and adversity.]

breakthrough to independence - no male dominance
 tells Lucy's secret
 next page (Chapter)

(1954 School Decy, Little Rock, Ark.)

With every scream she cursed and raged, ^{her} eyes glazed, Mattie at first tried maintaining her stance of authority which had always been successful in the past with the docile children and everyone else. But as Lola thrashed about she became threatening to Mattie and finally the defeated woman left the house ^{still} hearing the fowl language as she entered her house across the road. Lola explicitly cursed Zeke, Mattie, her mother, her father, her children; born unborn the farmers for whom she had worked and anyone who had ever crossed

Mattie tells all about Lucy

Chap 9 Character - Lola - Mattie - Zeke - Lola's daughter - Alice - Jack
 Problems - Child birth - psychological change - violence - incarceration - stabbing - escaping

path except Miz June. She clutched the red quilt and chewed on it. The once docile, obedient creature now felt intense hatred for the first time and intense love for Miz June only and the red quilt. Her senses sharpened, her mind completely alert for the first time. The gaining momentum of the pain giving impetus to the transformation. She wanted to tear the painful being from her body. She stood up and started running wildly around the room and in this fashion the baby was born to the released prisoner. She reached ^{ed} over ^L picked up the scissors with steady hands and with complete detachment cut the cord as Mattie had planned to do. The baby now detached and gasping for air, she picked it up and roughly ^{upside down} tossed it onto the mattress. It wailed. She knotted the umbilical cord ^{perfunctorily} and laid down beside the ^{infant} baby clutching the red quilt and pulled the crying baby girl on top of it, ^{having} exposing her breast for it to nurse and fell asleep contented. ^(insert from p 54) ^(paragraph about pain transforming, etc.) The passive, apathetic nature of the young girl before the incident of birth was gone; transformed by the pain into a woman of extreme intensity, whether it be love of hate, pleasure or pain. Every fiber of her being was intensified, Her inability to express her emotions in the past was now replaced by an exaggeration of expressions. Tears fell freely if she felt like crying. Laughter roared if she felt like laughing. Love and hate expressed likewise. A new zest for life reigned supreme. With spontaneity as her new guide line, she ^{became} was the complete master of her fate in every situation.

Mattie Lola and Zeke were appalled and tried to once more bring her to heel. But the new wanton Lola went her own way. The young children were left in the competent hands of the complacent Mattie as back to the fields Lola went to work and play to her hearts content with her employers none the wiser. She learned to finegle her way out of any compromising situation. She became a user of people as she had been used. She still worked long and hard during that summer season but only when it ^(field scene) suited her purposes. The money she made

increased her ability to expand her frivolous world which still was confined only to Seymore. Her horizons, however, now included the "on the hill" section and most importantly "Abe's". Drawn by the giddy feeling the ~~liquor~~^{alcohol} produced, and the rythmous music for dancing and the attention lavished on her by the men, she frequented the place constantly and lived wherever she happened to be at the time. ^{Lola} Being a beautiful, free-spirited woman, the men vied for her favors. Her lust was as intensified as her love and hate. Lola's ~~antics~~^{charming} intrigued the men making them forget their woes. In full bloom at sixteen, the wanton Lola made Jezabel seem dull and lackluster. By day ^{Lola} she worked, and by night she danced and frolicked with the men.

Zeke, now seeming to be ready to settle down and be a father to the children again, approached Lola commanding that she return to keep the home fires burning. He was waiting at "Abe's" for her because he had been unable to find her ^{elsewhere}. Nightfall approaching, he knew she would be here soon. He sat on an old wooden stool in the corner of the shabby ^{square room} establishment, walls planked with vertical, unpainted boards. He eyed an elevated, roughly made platform on the other side of the room where the banjo and fiddler were warming up. The two looked nearly identical in their tar-stained commissary clothes of dark green with brogan boots, the only difference being that one had a mustache to give him ^{an air of} distinction. They seemed to already have been partaking of the white moonshine ^{whiskey} liquor as did ^{many of} the others wandering in. Zeke was no stranger here to this seedy establishment but he never expected his own woman to enter such a den of eniquity. It was a place intended for men and sluts, but not mens wives, and he was determined to take his home tonight and teach her a lesson she wouldn't forget soon. His patience had run out. He was sick of his mother fawning over his children when their own mother should be doing it. Lola's "about face" had had its repurcussions in the form of domesticating her man. He now longed for the quiet, clean home of his ~~own~~ childhood reproduced in his own house and ~~there~~ was only one way to obtain this. Subtelty having failed, she had forced his hand and he would be a man and make her see t

the light. Another matter involved was the simple fact that he was completely enamoured of her. She was beautiful and exciting and, most of all, his property not to be tampered with. His anger was getting the best of him as she made her entrance in a red dress, which she had had Miz June order for her from Sears and Roebuck mail order catalogue. Now back in the employ of the Lee's once a week, she ~~was~~ chattered incessantly to Miz June about everything, delighting the woman who had observed the metamorphosis. However much the ~~kind lady~~ ^{her employer} feared for her, she ~~might~~ ^{would} caution but never reprimanded. She knew Lola deserved whatever happiness she could find. The red dress was full skirted a rustly, taffeta job with a low ~~decolletage~~ ^{neck line}, although Lola wasn't concerned about this, ~~just~~ ^{just} the color. She knew her beauty was enhanced by red. Her chocolate skin gleaming in the ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ kerosene lighted room. Her huge eyes glowing and crinkling with ~~laughter~~ ^{laughter} she proceeded ahead of a couple of men who were teasing and trying to get her attention. She was handed a glass of ~~whiskey~~ ^{whiskey} by ~~the~~ Abe, who kept an eye on Zeke over in the dimly lit corner now trying to observe Lola's actions without being seen by her. (more details of room) She slowly sipped the whiskey and joked with the two men who were soon joined by another. And then as the banjo and fiddle began to strum and ~~the~~ the players began to sing a bawdy tune, she began dancing with one and then the other ~~When~~ ^{still ~~was~~ unaware of Zeke's presence} When the tune ended, Zeke had seen enough to madden him throughly. He overturned the stool on which he sat, blood pounding in his ears, he made his presence known. Lola turned to see him now and laughed at him. More furious than ever at the embarrassment of being laughed at by his own woman in front of these men with whom he had been drinking buddies, he grabbed her shoulders and shook her fiercely. Then he slapped her so hard that she fell. Like an animal she leaped from the floor and tore into him with teeth and nails. Expletives of every kind he'd ever heard were flung at him. He'd never heard such language from a woman as she continued her physical assault.

She was besting him and he knew it. The by standers did exactly that. He was stronger but she was madder. Continuing to curse and bite and kick and a scratch, he grabbed, using all his strength, ^{and} finally pined her arms and legs under his body, her beautiful dress almost ripped off. He shouted in her face, "~~You~~ ^{Your} going home where ^{you} belong; you ^{'is} my woman". "I ain't no bodie's woman but my own, and I ain't never going ^{any} where I don't want to go and I'll kill you if you ^{try} to make me!" ^{She yelled} Continuing in her rage, "~~You didn't want me when I was with you~~ now I ain't goin' back, I'm gonna' do what I want for ^{the rest of my life}". "Like hell you will", ^{said Zeke, becoming aroused as well as enraged.} ~~spouted the enraged and now aroused~~ ^{Zeke.} And before she could duck, he released his hand hold on her left shoulder still sitting astride her and brought his right fist crashing into her face. ~~Blackness~~ took over the pain and Lola went home but not of her own ^{accord.} ~~free will.~~

Sunlight streamed through the cracks of the windows onto the floor. She closed her eyes again preferring the blackness in her pain. Her face was one big throb. She felt the cool air on her naked ^{body} reviving her. She raised her hand and felt her face, a taunt mask of swollen tissue. ^{Quickly} she sat up, regaining memory. She was alone. Zeke had gone to work. She rolled to the floor, anger enabling her to ignore the pain. She looked around, then dashed for the door. She ~~pushed~~ ^{pushed} it and it didn't move. ~~Pushing~~ ^{Pushing} it harder, now beating it with her fist then her head, still it didn't budge. She turned around and ran for the window pushing and beating but to no avail. Trying the other two and the back door. Nothing. She was imprisoned by Zeke. Like a wild woman she threw the chairs and pots and everything she could find towards the nailed and boarded up openings. No one could hear her or would want to get involved. She knew ~~Deke~~ ^{Deke} would ^{help} but he was at work and Mattie wouldn't ~~help her~~. Finally ~~totally~~ ^{totally} unable to move at all she lay on the ~~bare~~ ^{bare} floor writhing in the pain of her face once again. She laid there wailing and shouting all the curse words she could think of until she had depleted her

vocabulary

and then she was quiet. She started thinking then. She hated Zeke. She hated everything about him. She would kill the object of her hatred before she would be subdued as before. She began to make plans and became almost anticipatory as her plans developed into action. Not knowing what time it was she knew that it was no longer morning because the sun was now streaming ~~th~~ through the cracks on the west side of the house. She may not have been able to tell time even if she had a clock, but work in the fields had taught her to know the sun's position indicated the beginning or ending of the work day. Zeke would be home from work soon and she would be here just as he wanted but waiting with a butcher knife in the back room. She took the huge knife from its nail on the wall and sat in the kitchen and waited for Zeke, eager for revenge. She waited a long time not moving, pain forgotten in her distorted face. Finally she heard him quietly removing the boards on the door and laying them gently on the floor. And then she saw the path of light from the opening as she stood leaning into the door facing, arms up-raised, hands holding the knife with all her ^{strength.} ~~might.~~ His shadow fell on the floor, looming larger as he came closer looking all around for signs of his captive. Zeke coming closer, his shadow now gone and only the sounds, "Lola", he spoke quietly as if to tame her into submission. Closer he came. And then in the doorway he stood looking to the right, she lowered her hands with lightning quick speed before he could make his complete rotation looking to the left. Through the shoulder ~~xxxxxxx~~ and into the arm the knife slid. He screamed and grabbed his shoulder as she walked over his crumpling body and ran out the door, naked, never looking back, her heart pounding from excitement and the exhilaration of victory. She ran all the way "on the hill" to Abe's house ^{where she had been temporarily residing} beside the ~~place~~ ^{place where she had been assaulted the night before.} ~~of sin.~~ It was here that she had stayed most nights. A few witnessed the spectacle but none spoke, ~~they~~ ^{only} just watched the ~~lovely~~ ^{wild} ~~girl~~ ^{girl} with the grotesque face dashing by. Reaching Abe's shanty, she pulled a cardboard box to the center of the floor and put on the first dress she found. A ~~ragged~~ ^{ragged} blue, ~~sprigged~~

cotton print which hung loosely. She then ran next door to "Abe's Place"

swinging wide the ~~red~~ heavy ~~pine~~ rotting wood door
where she found Abe watering down the moonshine and getting ready for opening time that night. She *prushed* in breathless. "Abe, Abe", she shouted.

Abe looked up from his work not recognizing her at first glance. Then he said,

"Lawd, Gal, he *saw* nuf' punched *your* face in good *this* time". "Abe I *done* kilt Zeke"; she *readily demonstrated* *her stabbing manner*, (more detail to expression and description)

Continuing defenseively, she said, "He *had* it coming, you *done* see and beat me last night *trus* then pleading, "you gotta' hide me, *the* law gonin' get me for *sure*". "Lawd' be, Miz Lola, I *sure* can't help you; *you* is his woman and

il ain't a getting mixed up in *this*", *replied* the flustered Abe. "I *done* in 'nuf' treble, *il* figures for letting you stay at my place", he *said* on, "you best *run* along now, *finalized* Abe, getting back to his work, "Abe, she *stuck* collecting her courage, if'n *il* *see* go dis gonin' tell everybody

'bout *the* here moon shine lik'ker whate being brung here," she *threatened*. Hands on her hips, eyes widened, she waited for his reply. Eiving her his full attention now, she *lamented*, "Lawd, Miss Lola, you *sure* nuf' mean, *done* kilt your man, and now you gonin' sick de Law on me". "I *sure* nuf' will if'n you don't hide me", she *stated* emphatically. Scratching his head and mumbling exasperatingly, he finally replied, "All *right* go on over to my house and stay low 'til *il* works out a plan 'on my haid, he said scratching the indicated muffed instrument for thinking. "If'n any body comes 'ceptin' me, you go out the back door and get under the house and be still, you heh", he *said*, then to himself, "Lawd how'd *il* ever get into *the* mess"? Lola still apprehensive *answered*, "All *right*, long's you don't try to double cross me, *cause* if'n you do *il* do ja just what I say", warned the fearful woman *to* unsure to whom she would have imparted the information having no idea of how to contact anyone concerned with the law even if she had the courage. The nearest law officials would have been at the county seat ten miles away

and she had never even been there. She had heard that occasionally ~~the sherriff~~
 Sherriff ~~xxxx~~ Sykes would visit "on the hill" when trouble would arise in the form
 of fighting between workers resulting in a shooting ^{which would be} reported by Mr. Lee driving
 over for assistance. These incidences were rare and usually disputes were
 settled between the two without outside intervention. It was most common for
 the two ~~wixxx~~ to use Mr. Lee as an arbitrator until the differences were
 settled. A tradition of having been dependent on the white man for guidance
^{was} passed down from generation to generation, the white overseer often ~~had to~~
 play ^{ing the role of} parent and judge. It was an effective method of law as long as the
 overseer was a fair man, as was George Lee, and definitely preferable to being
 given over to the unscrupulous discriminating practices of some S. Ga. ~~xxx~~
 officier ^{er} of the law. Sherriff Sykes was rumored to be such a man and was
 called in only as a last resort. Lola knew all this from ~~txx~~ heresay in
 the ~~colla~~ fields and the commissary. It was rumored also that he was involved
 in the moonshine operation in the form of taking payoffs from the local producers
 in return for ^{his} silence to the federal agents who sometimes staged raids in the
 flat wooded areas of the county. Lola's store of information was enough to
 instill fear of the cells under lock and key which she had heard many were
 never even remembered to be there until the stench of their bodies were smelled
 or another victim of the biased criminal justice system needed to share the
 cell. Lola shivered in the heated square space of Abe's shanty thinking about
 the possibilities of being locked away behind bars indefinitely, having trouble
 conjuring up a ^{picture of a} jail in her mind or the indomitable, cruel sherriff who
 couldn't remember poeple. Having never considered the consequences before the
 violent act, she now became obsessed with hiding. Scrunching down into the
 corner on the splintery, filthy floor as to become invisible, every sound in the
 darkening evening seemed to be an approaching white man with a scowling face.

The familiar sounds of nature which had always been a source of comfort, now seemed ominous and foreboding. A nearby whippoorwill answering the call of a distant hopeful made her jerk her downward ^{to} head upward. The ~~shadow~~ of the gray moss gently moving in the hot breeze casting a shadow through the western opening of the window onto the littered floor startled her so that she jumped up and started for the back door. Then the steady fiddling of the crickets restored her once more to a semi-peace. Exhausted from the physical and emotional stress of the events of the day, against her will, her body and her mind finally won out and she slumped to the floor and slept.

"Get up, Gal". Lola ^{was} startled awake and was instantly on her feet, memory totally regained. Abe said, "I ~~do~~ got to get you out of here" "I ain't been able to learn much from the men 'bout your predicament but seems like you in a heap of treble". "You man ain't daid yet but he sho' nuf' been stobbed ~~like~~ like. Wouldn't su'prize me none if'n Mister Lee gets the law to you right away. Now ~~he~~ got to make a run to pick up some more moonshine 'bout half way to Valosta, and I be gonna take you half way ^{and} you can walk the rest of the way. ^{load the car.} Now get your stuff and meet me in the truck", Abe ^{having} said all this with out giving Lola a chance to speak, ~~he~~ turned and left, steps reverberating on the speaky floor. Lola quickly grabbed her cardboard box containing her few belongings, the mirror, which she had been using more often lately, enjoying the pretty face peering back at her, ^{and} a few old dresses from Miz June, minus the red beauty ~~from~~ Miz June had ordered for her, having been discarded somewhere by Zeke. Realizing she must have slept for quite a while, when she saw a bright moon casting shadows of the oaks on the sandy yard, she quietly but swiftly ^{crept} ~~swift~~ across the yard looking around her. A A monotonous barking dog at a near by house answering the barking of a dog in the quarters across the road assured her that her presence hadn't aroused him. The engine of the rusty blue and brown old truck with a wooden body filled with junk iron clattered loudly as she

opened the resisting door and crawled in tossing her box beside her on the
 torn upholstery of the seat with springs halting it, leaving little space ~~for~~
^{on which to sit,} ~~sitting~~ Sitting atop the uncomfortable protrusions, she lifted the box placing
 it squarely on her lap. Neither spoke to the other. Before she could close
 the out sprung door, Abe forced the gear shift into action hitting her left
 knee with his hand jerking the truck into ^{motion} ~~action~~ and slowly began the descent
 around the shanty past the establishment with out turning on the head lamps.
 The rickety truck with it's clanging load moved out and down the hill follow-
 ing the moon lit dirt roads where Lola had walked barefoot so many times; past
 the block church and the cemetary where her mother lay. They crossed the main
 road ^{entering} ~~into~~ the road leading to the quarters. Still moving slowly to keep from
 attracting attention of the now sleeping village, which was impossible because
 the sound of a vehicle at night was so unusual. However, had anyone heard,
 they would have known it was Abe going for his load as was the usual procedure
 this time of the week and would not have been alarmed. Lola watched the houses
 pass by peacefully, ~~the~~ the moonlight illuminating the ^{tin} roofs with its white
 blaze. Now passing her own she wondered if Zeke ~~was~~ there. It looked so
 quiet and lifeless that she felt sure that he must have died regardless of
 what Abe had said. But she felt no remorse, only fear for herself. Looking
 to the left she saw Mattie's house and a light through the open window and
 thought she saw Mattie in her rocker but wasn't sure. She felt fear take
 hold once more at the thought of Mattie's revenge through Sherriff Sykes.
 She wondered how the children looked. She couldn't quite remember. The baby
 had been only a month ^{old} when she had last seen it, and the ^{little boy about 7 years old.} ~~one year old boy.~~ I
 had seemed so long ago that Mattie had taken the "poor lil' young'uns" across
 the road and forbade her to come, although she had no inclination to do so in
 her haste to begin to live. Now the sound of the clattering slow moving
 truck and familiar sounds of night in Seymore, a living part of her, saddened

her and made her fearful of things unknown. Passing the white house now quiet and tranquil she had to push aside the urge to jump out and run to Miz June and sit in the kitchen smelling the clean fragrance of her looking into her smiling face and be comforted and cared for like a baby. Somehow ~~she~~ knew Miz June would protect her and help her to be able to stay in her familiar world. Miz June would with a kindly smile turn the horrible Sherriff around and send him away. Too fearful to go and too fearful to stay~~y~~, she did nothing missing her chance as the truck ambléd on down the dusty, dimly lit road away from Seymore. ~~She~~ She turned on the seat for one last glance of her home since birth and cleared her throat to stifle a cry. Regaining her composure, somewhat, she looked out the window at the passing pines with intermittent scrub oaks and ~~nestled~~ palmetto plants ^{nestled} at the base of the trees. The warm night air dried her tears ^{beheld} ~~beheld~~ lashes. Slapping a busy mosquito from her strong arm, then scratching the sting, she stared at Abe, intent upon the trail being followed in the moonlight. Crossing the wooden bridge over the river, she could smell the clean fragrance of the waters below as the tires in unison drummed ^{across} ~~xxxx~~ the boards then again onto the road.

Abe still silent, concentrating on his mission and quite worr~~ing~~^{ing} about the pickup of the liquer as well as his involvement with Lola, slowed the truck almost to a stop, gazing intently at the heavily weeded ramp ahead turning off on the ^{SELDOM USED OLD three pathed road} bumpy road leading to the site of the Aroneveux. ^{INTENDED}

The pine thicket was eliminating the moonlight, to some extent, so he turned on the head lamps and traveled on, looking carefully for any indication of his supplier's presence. Lola stared ahead, unsure of what she was supposed to see, clutching the open window to keep from being tossed about in the bumpy vehicle. Suddenly Abe stopped the truck causing Lola's box to fall forward. She quickly grabbed for it and replaced it on her lap without taking her eyes from the spot ahead where a fat, white man with a red beard, appeared from a thicket into the gleam of the lights of the truck. ~~He was~~ wearing a red-plaid shirt, the same color of his beard, Zeke, without swithching off the truck, jerked the gears to neutral position and opened the squeaking door. Lola could not hear the exchange of the few words spoken but ^{WATCHED AS} they both quickly exited through the thick palmettos

and hucklyberry bushes returning in a short time each carrying a five gallon jimmy john jug to the rear of the truck. ^{They stopped in front of the truck lights when Abe pulled the jacket into his pocket and} Turning slightly so as to get a better view, Lola saw them rearrange the junk iron around ^{the} begin loading ^{the} jugs as quietly as possible. ^{carefully stuffing croker bags around the jugs for protection} Again they returned to the same spot and repeated the procedure. They both moved jerkily through exaggerated shadows looming ~~in~~ⁱⁿ the darkness, frightening Lola, for each shadow seemed to take on the image of Sherriff Stykes. When the ~~last~~ clanging junk iron covered the jugs, ^{SATISFACTORILY} Abe approached the door on the drivers side and ordered Lola to ~~get~~^{get} out and bring ~~her things~~^{her things}. "Why ~~that~~^{that} what

What for?", ~~asked~~^{asked} Lola, now frightened of the stranger as well as the sherriff

"See' do lake il sez, woman," ~~replied~~ ^{said} Abe. Terrified but determined not to show it, Lola slid across the ~~probbig~~ ^{probing} springs and onto the dirt as a briar snagged her trembling legs. Now she was face to face with Abe and the stranger. "This here man gon' ^{to} take you to town and find you a place to stay," Abe ~~stated~~ ^{said} bluntly, so get along now, and don't give me no more lip; ^{you} ~~hear?~~ ^{hear?}" "Shi will now," ^{said} ~~acknowledged~~ Lola gathering her box in both arms. Abe was already backing his truck down the road as Lola started following the alarmingly quiet stranger along the ~~partially~~ ^{partially} scantily moon lit passage deeper into the woods. He walked so fast that she had trouble keeping up with him. Briars and bear grass clawed at her legs and bare feet and she feared the presence of snakes too much to look down, but more than snakes she feared the man ahead whom she had completely lost ~~sight of~~ until she heard the sound ahead of a truck engine and then caught sight of a single ~~red~~ ^{red} tail light. She hurried her pace and upon reaching the passenger side of the truck she ^{hastily} ~~opened~~ ^{opened} the door. Still clutching the box, with her legs burning and stinging, filled with thorns; she climbed onto the seat and settled herself bravely. The smell of alcohol permeated the surroundings and from the corner of her eye, with out turning her head, she dared a look in the strangers direction. ~~He acted like she~~ Totally ignoring her presence, he shifted the grinding gears to reverse, and with his head stuck out the window began backing hastily into the thicket on his left, then shifting again he proceeded forward out of the woods at a high rate of speed not slowing until he reached the main road...

1954 School deseg. Little rock

The truck swerved, barely missing the ditch as Lola ~~gritted her teeth~~ clamped her hand over her mouth to keep from screaming, then headed in a westerly direction. Lola wasn't sure if she were better off at the mercy of the law or here with this unknown, drunken white man. The white men with whom she had had previous contact were authoritative and apathetic, but not malicious and cruel, as she suspected this one to be. This was a