

Draft The Christmas season ~~came~~ to Seymore and Miz June sent ~~to~~ a bag of oranges by Mama for the kids. ~~A~~ Christmas ~~was~~ the only time they ever ~~had~~ ^{had} fruit. The children ~~were~~ exuberant over the sweet, bitter, juicy oranges, ~~and~~ peeling them halfway down, devouring ~~ed~~ the remainder of orange and peel in their haste.

First draft

For the first time Lola's hunger wasn't foremost in her mind - anticipation overwhelmed it ^{because} ~~id~~ that Mama said that Mrs. June had asked her to bring Lola the next day to help prepare Christmas dinner for the family and guests. Lola had never even dreamed of entering the large white house; Never once had it crossed her mind that she might go past those doorsteps on which she had sat waiting for Mama. It ~~wasn't~~ ^{felt} that Lola felt inferior to the white race but simply that her world had definite boundaries and the white house ~~wasn't~~ ^{was} included. Lola had watched the Lee children playing and knew they were different from her, never questioning why. They were just different.

Christmas morning arrived and even Mama's ~~xxxx~~ crude awakening couldn't diminish the joy for Lola. She ~~was~~ ^{was} going to the white house. She hastily put on a clean, ragged dress which one of the Lee girls had outgrown and with Mama yelling for her to "get herself ^{cleaned} up", she poured some water out of the old bucket and splashed it all over her head and arms, drying with an old dirty rag which lay nearby on the floor. ^{Para} After Mama had checked her and grunted disapproval, nevertheless, they set out walking through the white frosty morning to the Lee's house. Lola skipped all the way ^{her feet crunching the frost, head, grass and patches of frozen earth} while Mama, ^{here} already smelling of liquor, admonished her about how "uppity white folks" felt ^{Para} about nasty niggers" and how she was to "keep ^{extra} quiet" in the house. Going around to the back, Lola and Mama entered ^{de} through the door and Lola blinked at all the color. The nicest house Lola had ever seen was Deak's. She had seen through the windows, the neat arrangements of meager furniture with occasional cloths covering the tops of some. But she wasn't prepared for this display. It ~~was~~ ^{was} so warm ^{there} and smelled so nice. She stood gawking at the bright yellow curtains, walls painted white, the smooth white counters, the shiny aluminum pots which hung above, and the oil cloth of yellow on the table. Immaculate ^{ly} scrubbed wood floors met her gaze as Mama pinched her in response

Chap. 4 Characters - Lola - Mama - Mrs. June - Lee Children - ~~the~~ guests -
 Problems - dealing with first job in white environment - dealing with adult expectations - personal identity and awareness

Cyla Mae 21 and Lola

to Miz Junes entrance. "Good Morning and Merry Christmas" said Miz June ^{addressed them individually} in a cheerful voice. "Mornin' Mam'" ^{Lola's Mama.} replied Mama. Lola imitated and lapsed back into an awe struck state. Miz June ^{was} wearing a pretty, pink rose-bud dress and her lovely blonde hair curved softly around her ^{round} face. Her smile ^{was} beautiful to Lola and she ^{THOUGHT} that just being ^{HERE} at ^{that} moment might be like the heaven that preacher Bob spoke of in the little block church on Sundays when she attended. Nudged back to reality by Mama, Lola tried to listen closely to what Mrs. June had to say. Instructions were given for preparing and serving the meal. Mama already knew her way around the kitchen but Lola ^{was} lost. She decided again just to imitate Mama. Suddenly the loud shrill noise of excited children ^{she} broke the calm and Mrs. June pushed the kitchen door open, leaving it ajar, as Lola watched the two girls under a tree ^{decorated with silver tinsel and candy} all over it. One blonde girl dressed in a blue ^{flannel} cotton gown ^{was} holding a doll and exclaiming about the beauty of it while the other ^{was} opening a brightly colored package. Lola had never seen a Christmas tree and ^{didn't} have any idea that such toys existed. Her gaze travelled around the room and ^{she} saw white lace curtains hung from windows beside the tree, a fire ^{low crackles} was burning in the fireplace. The smell of cedar filled the air and there ^{was} a green ^{slip vinyl garnet on wall} couch with a matching chair beside. The wooden floor ^{was} covered partially with a cloth rug of ^{similar shades of} green colors (shades) Lola ^{was} totally absorbed in the Merry Christmas process until glancing back at Mama she realized it ^{was} time to work. Mama was putting a big naked bird which she called a turkey into a large, purple speckled pot. She then opened a white door and pushed the bird inside closing the door. That ^{was} Lola realized, the stove. Mama said the turkey ^{was} in the oven. She told Lola to peel the sweet potatoes. This Lola ^{was} familiar with because occasionally she had helped to dig these for the farmers, sometimes chewing on the raw sweet vegetable when no one was looking. She began peeling the potatoes as

para

instructed, at the yellow oil clothed table wishing she could touch the smooth surface but not daring. Her mind wandering ^{back} back to the other room with the huge tree inside the house and ^{HE WAS} unable to imagine what ^{WAS} was in the unwrapped package. She ^{HAD} had heard the young girl holding the "dead looking baby" call it a doll. Perhaps that ^{WAS} was what ^{WAS} was in the other box. After peeling and cutting the potatoes, Mama ^{TOOK} took them and poured some kind of brown syrup on ^{TOP OF THEM AND PUT THEM INTO THE OVEN WITH THE TURKEY,} ~~top of tje, and put tje, onto tje pver wotj tje tjrlen,~~ ^{Lola} she ^{WAS} then presented with a bundle of turnip greens and told to "look ^{them} and wash them". She ^{KNOW} knew about these also but ^{WAS} was unsure about the "looking" business; ^{therefore} she just looked at them - ^{got} got up, carried the bundle to the counter by the stove, poured water out of the bucket into the large wash pan, doused them and turned around waiting for the next chore. Mama inspecting the turnips, grabbed one of her braids which ^{WAS} was already sticking straight up, yanked it up and around turning her head with it, and said, "You lazy, good for Nothing nigger. You takes each leaf, breaks it off, looks for bugs ^{and the likes} and the likes, wash them 'til they free from sand, peels the roots, and washes them again". When the braid ^{WAS} was released, Lola snapped her head back and obeyed although she ^{CAN'T} couldn't believe all ^{that} that washing ^{WAS} was necessary for a bunch of greens. And so the long process of preparing Christmas dinner ^{WAS} was continued.

The aroma of the cooking food nearly ^{drove} drove the hungry Lola insane. Most of the time her hunger ^{WAS} was inconsequential because she ^{didn't} didn't have to smell cooking so near, but now it ^{WAS} was almost unbearable. And the sight of the end result ^{WAS} was most devastating of all. Unable to bear the sight and smell of the pecan pies any longer she ^{stuck} stuck her finger right in and scooped and plopped it into her mouth which ^{made} made it worse because now she ^{felt} felt an unmovable urge to eat the entire thing. Somehow ^{she} she ^{WAS} was distracted from the irresistible food by the sounds from the other parts of the house. Laughter and greetings for ^{the} guests arriving enabled her to keep her mind on something other than her stomach. Mrs. June ^{came} came back in smiling and ^{told} told her to "set the table for 9 people". She ^{turned} turned around and ^{left} left again. Lola had no precedence

to follow. ^{for setting the table,} She had ^{actually,} no idea what "set the table" meant, and Mama ^{was} busy making some drinks which she called ~~s~~ tea. Lola ^{was} afraid to interrupt her because she had seen her drinking ~~quite a bit~~ from her whiskey bottle hidden in her huge bosom and ^{know} from past experience that the more she drank ^{the} meaner she ^{would} become. Lola kept ^{pt} looking around for some clue for "set the table". At last it dawned ^{ed} on her that the nine people who ^{would} eat this food must have something to eat it out of. — That meant ^d dishes. She had seen Lucy raking scraps out of a ^{face} plate to feed her dog and she saw some of these on a nearby taller table. She dragged ^{ed} a chair over and standing on it reached ^{ed} a stack of plates and knew she was in luck. There were ^{were} nine people and she ^{could} count to ten. She ^{took} the nine plates down and set ^{to} them on the round table where remaining particles of the too clean greens still lingered ^{ed}. She "set the table" by placing the plates in a circle around the edge and decided they needed something to eat with. Quietly, so as not to disturb Mama, ^{she} pulled open drawers almost dropping one because she pulled ^{ed} it out too fast and ^{caught} it on the way to the floor. Putting it back she finally ^{found} nine spoons, placing one in each plate, then standing back to admire her clever arrangements. The kitchen door opened ^{ed} and Mrs. June entered ^{ed}, stopped ^{ed} and stared ^{ed} at Lola's creation. Lola beamed ^{ed} with pride until she saw ^{ed} the puzzled expression on Mrs. June's face. She didn't ^{look} displeased, just puzzled, which relieved ^{ed} Lola who by now knew ^{ed} that something ^{was} wrong. "Lola," ^{said,} Mrs. June, "since there are so many of us eating together today, I think we will use the dining room and some different dishes for a change, come with me".

Lola followed ^{ed} her out of the kitchen through the room with the tree and an additional "dad looking baby", just as she had imagined ^{ed} was in the unwrapped package. The room ^{was} now filled with Mr. Lee, the girls, and their guests, who seemed ^{ed} not to notice her passing through, as they continued ^{ed}

with their conversation and laughter. Lola ~~was~~^{used} slightly distracted but kept her pace behind Mrs. June. They entered ~~the~~^{de} another room with a ~~large~~^{large} table which Mrs. June called ~~the~~^{the} dining room. ~~It was~~^{The walls were} painted a gold color with white frilly curtains at the windows. She watched ~~the~~^{the} Mrs. June carefully taking more dishes down from another tall table and place them on the long dining table ~~by~~^{flanked by many high-backed chairs.} Mrs. June ~~was~~^{was} chatting in a friendly tone all the time. She placed a handful of white folded papers on the table ~~;~~[;] these she called ~~the~~^{the} napkins. She showed Lola how to "set the table". Lola ~~was~~^{was} amazed at the beauty of the table after it ~~was~~^{was} arranged and ~~felt~~^{felt} proud of her new found knowledge. ~~Back~~^{Back} in the kitchen she ~~went~~^{went} quickly gathered the plates off the round table, climbed up on the chair again and replaced ~~the~~^{the} them, dragged the chair back to its place and ~~went~~^{went} to stand by Mama who had finished the tea and ~~was~~^{was} now putting ice in ~~the~~^{the} glasses. ~~After~~^{Conversation} all the excitement of the morning Lola ~~again~~^{again} started eyeing the food. Her M-ma quickly set her to work carrying all the food platter to the dining room upon which ~~were~~^{was} heaped ~~with~~^{with huge thing back of arm for a} turkey, a ~~large~~^{large} pan of cornbread dressing, which caused Lola to struggle under its weight, candied yams, turnip greens and red cranberry sauce which quivered as Lola walked. Also she carried in the pumpkin and pecan pies and hot rolls. Mrs. June ~~was~~^{was} arranging the guest in their places and the girls ~~were~~^{are} dragging their dolls and arguing about who's belonged to whom. Lola ~~was~~^{is} so intrigued because the girls ~~were~~^{are wearing} red, identical dresses with white lacy colars. Lola ~~knows~~^{is} that this ~~was~~^{is} her favorite color of all those she had seen today. After she and Mama ~~had~~^{have} finished serving they returned to the kitchen to begin cleaning. Lola ~~stood~~^{stands} on top of the chair again as she ~~washes~~^{washes} pots and utensils as big as she. Everytime Mama inspected one it ~~was~~^{is} thrown back for Lola to repeat the process because it ~~was~~^{is} not as clean as it should be. Weak from hunger and exhaustion with dishwater running up to her elbows when she scratched her nose, Lola plodded on. Mrs. June ~~came~~^{tells} into the kitchen and told them to clear the dining room. Lola again ~~was~~^{is} having difficulty with the language which everyone else seemed

"You done with setting that there table, Lola, she asked?"

"Yasum," said Lola, speaking to the back of
Mamma's back, hunched and efficient, her dark hands
placing fistfuls of picked ice from pan to glasses,
occasionally missing their target. She turned, sneaking a
glance at the door and Lola, then reached into
her basket for the bottle, taking a quick gulp, and
hastily replacing the lid, returning it once more to
the basket. Then began the ice picking with
fervor.

"Damn white folks, specte us to work til we drop.
Set de food ready, clean de house, spic and span,
while they eite fat and rested. U bout done had
enough of they's stuff," she said.

Lola began shifting from foot to foot and began
eyeing all the food before her on the counter and stove;
the scents rising in waves, tempting her gnawing
stomach.

to understand, but this time since Mama ^{IS} ~~was~~ in the lead she ^{WILL} ~~would~~ again follow. Into the dining room they ^{Go} ~~went~~, Mama handed her stacks of dishes to carry back and begin washing. The other members of the family ^{ARE} ~~were~~ now sitting on the green furniture again deep in conversation with the two red-clad girls sitting at their feet moving some red and black circles across a piece of cardboard with red and black squares. Again they ^{ARE} ~~were~~ arguing, the dead-looking babies with blank faces glaring straight up ^{ARE} ~~were~~ near by. After the infinite washing ^{IS} ~~was~~ completed Lola stepped down from the chair and Miz June entered and announced, ^{Lola Lula Mae and Lola why don't you and the other girls} "Go ahead and eat ~~and~~ you can finish cleaning and putting the food away later." Thrilled, ^{at the prospect of relieving her growing stomach} Lola started for the door to go home to eat when she heard Miz June speak again, "Lola, I hope you enjoy the turkey and have a Merry Christmas". At first she ^{CAN'T} ~~couldn't~~ believe what she ~~has~~ heard, but this she ^{UNDERSTANDS} ~~understood~~. She and Mama ^{ARE} ~~were~~ to eat some of this marvelous food right here in heaven. After Miz June ^{LEAVES} ~~left~~ Mama started eating and Lola joined her almost choking on the ^{piece} ~~large~~ leg of the turkey in her haste. She loved it. But most of all the pecan pies. ^{and} She vowed someday to eat ten pecan pies. ~~Lola did have a Merry Christmas.~~

After that day Lola ^{IS} ~~was~~ called upon frequently by Miz June to help out with Sunday dinner. She looked forward to these events with eagerness not only for the food and warmth but the color. Mrs. June showed her more kindness than she ~~has~~ ever known in her life. Sometimes on Sun. afternoons when the kitchen ^{must} ~~had~~ been cleaned after the big meals, Mrs. June ~~would~~ bring out some clothes for Lola or some toys which she ^{CAN} ~~could~~ never quite figure out what to do with. But she loved looking at them and ~~would~~ cherish the box which she kept in a special corner of her shanty. One of the boxes on one occasion contained a small mirror. Upon examining it in the privacy of her corner Lola ~~saw~~ her reflection and ^{IS} ~~was~~ startled. Lowering it and gasping she raised it again and peered carefully at herself drinking in the tiny black face and too large eyes twinkling, patted down a braid ^{WHICH SPRINGS} ~~when~~ back when she removed her hand. After that she frequently looked at Lola to be sure she ^{IS} ~~was~~ still intact. She ^{IS} ~~was~~ beginning to feel an attachment for Mrs. June and like a pet

longed for the increasing attention. ^{papa} The following Sunday when she ~~was~~^{is} full and happy and the kitchen cleaned Mrs. June ~~brought~~^{BRINGS} her another cardboard box with words on it which Lola ~~couldn't~~^{CAN NOT} read. Lola hurried home ahead of Mama eager to look at the contents in privacy. She dashed for her corner, lifted the lid and reached inside to touch the arm of a doll. She jerked her hand back picked up the box and dumped the "dead-looking baby" on the floor. Standing back from it at a safe distance she decided that even if it did come from Miz June she ~~didn't~~^{DOESN'T} like it. She turned the box sideways, ~~took~~^{TAKES} her foot and kicked it inside. She then stood the box upright and closed the lid never to open it again. The great affection for Mrs. June continued but the anticipation of the gifts diminished.

(write "squalting men" scene later)