

Frankie – American, 12

MEMBER OF THE WEDDING CARSON MCCOLLERS

First produced in New York in 1950 at the Empire Theatre and set in a small southern town in America in August 1945. **Frankie** is a dreamy, restless girl – one moment full of energy and the next, retreating into her fantasy world. She adores her brother Jarvis and his fiancée Janice, who are soon to be married, and has made up her mind that after the wedding she will stay with them and they will all three travel the world together. She confides her dreams to Berenice, the black cook, who warns her that two is company and three is a crowd, especially at weddings.

In this scene Frankie wanders out into the yard. Berenice has gone out for the evening with friends, and Frankie feels excluded. She calls across to her little cousin John Henry to come over and spend the night with her. John Henry wants to go out and play with the other children, but Frankie only wants to talk about the wedding. She is restless and disturbed.

A New Directions Paperback

Frankie

I told Berenice that I was leavin' town for good and she did not believe me. Sometimes I honestly think she is the biggest fool that ever drew breath. You try to impress something on a big fool like that, and it's just like talking to a block of cement. I kept on telling and telling and telling her. I told her I had to leave this town for good because it is inevitable. Inevitable . . . Don't bother me, John Henry, I'm thinking . . . About the wedding. About my brother and the bride. Everything's been so sudden today. I never believed before about the fact that the earth turns at the rate of about a thousand miles a day. I didn't understand why it was that if you jumped up in the air you wouldn't land in Selma or Fairview or somewhere else instead of the same back yard. But now it seems to me I feel the world going around very fast. (Frankie begins turning around in circles with arms outstretched. John Henry copies her. They both turn) I feel it turning and it makes me dizzy . . . (Suddenly stopping her turning) I just now thought of something . . . I know where I'm going . . . I tell you I know where I'm going. It's like I've known it all my life. Tomorrow I will tell everybody . . . (Dreamily) After the wedding I'm going with them to Winter Hill. I'm going off with them after the wedding . . . Shush, just now I realised something. The trouble with me is that for a long time I have been just an 'I' person. All other people can say 'we'. When Berenice says 'we' she means her lodge and church and coloured people. Soldiers can say 'we' and mean the army. All people belong to a 'we' except me . . . Not to belong to a 'we' makes you too lonesome. Until this afternoon I didn't have a 'we', but now after seeing Janice and Jarvis I suddenly realise something . . . I know that the bride and my brother are the 'we' of me. So I'm going with them, and joining with the wedding. This coming Sunday when my brother and the bride leave this town, I'm going with the two of them to Winter Hill. And after that to whatever place that they will ever go. (There is a pause) I love the two of them so much and we belong to be together. I love the two of them so much because they are the *we* of me.