

AIN'T NOBDOY HERE BUT YOU AND ME

African-American folktale

10-Minute Play

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CHARACTERS

PAPA SAM	an African-American man, farmer in his early 50's. Vigorous
BF	a frisky, animated, African-American man. Papa Sam's longtime friend.
KID	A young, ambitious grandchild
GHOST	a cool, slithering creature. Dressed as a bluesman from the 'juke joint'

SETTING

A shack in the south.

TIME

Evening. Some time in the 1930s.

*In loving memory of
Alberta Chambers*

(A family living room, late evening. PAPA SAM, BF are playing checkers and KID is playing with toys on the floor. PAPA SAM bursts out of his seat to dance *'the jive'*. They all laugh)

PAPA SAM

Now everybody knows I got the best jive this side of the Mississippi.

BF

Yeah. Everybody knows.

PAPA SAM

I love going over to the joint sometimes. High Waters is playing the guitar...

BF

Ah yeah! (*in excitement and agreement*)

PAPA SAM

It's hot as can be. Everybody just dancin' the night away. (*reminiscing*) You can feel the music under the wood of the flo' while we dancing till we can't dance no mo'.

KID

You sure are good at dancing Papa Sam.

PAPA SAM

Oh, well thank you there. You see—it's all about living in the moment.

KID

What that feel like papa?

PAPA SAM

Good (*beat*) free.

BF

Now that's a good feeling.

PAPA SAM

And they have some of the best watermelon you can find in town.

KID

We know how much you love watermelon papa.

PAPA SAM

You know just like that time I—

BF

Here we go again

BF/ KID

Another story.

(They laugh)

PAPA SAM

Alrighty! You need to pay attention to the board, because I'm coming for the 'kings'. *(referring to the checkers game)*

BF

I don't think so. Not this time.

(PAPA SAM begins to sing a tune. KID stands and joins in. BF begins to clap and play rhythms on the table and objects around. KID starts to sing so loud it overpowers everyone.)

**STANDIN' AT THE CROSSROAD, RISIN' SUN
GOIN' DOWN
STANDIN' AT THE CROSSROAD, RISIN' SUN
GOIN' DOWN
I BELIEVE TO MY SOUL, LORD I'M SINKIN'
DOWN**

(They laugh)

PAPA SAM

I think it's time to hit the sheets kiddo.

KID

Oh no! Please Papa Sam (*pleading*) One more story!

BF

Yeah, just one more Sam.

PAPA SAM

(*hesitation*) Okay, okay. I guess there's time for just one more.

BF

Did your gramps ever tell you the story about this house?

KID

What story gramps?

PAPA SAM

No story at all. Now gon' and hush. A kid don't need to be worried about things like that.

KID

What kind of things ?

BF

(*ominous and spooky. BF is letting KID in on 'the top secret info'*) Everyone in town knows this old shack is haunted, but Sam just laughs whenever folks talk about it.

(KID screams. PAPA SAM consoles KID)

KID

Haunted? (*frightened*)

PAPA SAM

Let them laugh. In fact they can laugh all they want. When you overcome your fears...

PAPA SAM/KID

You will truly be free.

PAPA SAM

That's right. There is nothing to fear.

KID

Are you sure? Will a ghost get to me in my room?

PAPA SAM

I don't believe in ghosts... in haunts and there are no haunted houses. Don't believe in that. Not one bit.

BF

Ah, come on. Loosen your feathers Sam. I'd reckon this house is haunted! Just like they say.

PAPA SAM

Sure, if you say! Well... I reckon that it's time for bed.

KID

I don't think I can go to my room alone... not after knowing that papa.

PAPA SAM

Everything is gonna' be just fine.

(They hug)

Ain't nobody here but you and me... *(teasing BF)* and your silly uncle over there. Now see you later alligator.

KID

After while, crocodile. Good night.

(KID exits. PAPA SAM and BF start to wrap up their checkers game.)

BF

You sure are good with that kid.

PAPA SAM

Thank you, but you have got to stop with all the nonsense. You're gonna' scare that child.

BF

You and me both know its true. That's why you wont ever sleep here in this room alone.

PAPA SAM

I nod here all the time *(trying to convince)*

BF

Mmhm. If you say

PAPA SAM

I think I'm gonna head to other room soon. It's getting pretty late...

BF

I have a big idea!

PAPA SAM

And what big idea is that?

BF

Let's make a deal. Just hear me out before you go interrupting. *(stands)*
Everybody in town knows how much you love watermelon.

PAPA SAM

(jumps up in excitement) I love nothing more in this world than eating watermelons.

BF

I will let you have one off my wagon if you sleep in this room tonight.

PAPA SAM

(thinking) I'm not too sure about that.

BF

I have a whole wagonload full of watermelons.

PAPA SAM

(getting more excited. He reconsiders)

A whole wagonload?

BF

Sure do. And I'll let you have the whole wagon.

PAPA SAM

Well, I think you got yourself a deal.

(both shake hands)

I can't believe I let you talk me into this.

BF

Well you have to get over your fear sometime.

PAPA SAM

It's not a fear if you just don't believe.

BF

Well you should. Just like we all do. I tried to tell you before you moved in. If you need me, i'll be just down the road.

PAPA SAM

Well, see you later.

BF

After while.

(BF exits. PAPA SAM picks up matches and lights his pipe. Sits on the sofa and begins to read a newspaper. As he reads the newspaper, PAPA SAM whistles a lively tune.)

(creaking sound)

(GHOST appears next to PAPA SAM. GHOST starts to whistle the same song as PAPA SAM and he suddenly looks up from the newspaper and notices GHOST)

PAPA SAM

(startled, in freight)

Wha—who?

(PAPA SAM drops the pipe and newspaper)

GHOST

It's me (*hissing*)

STANDIN' AT THE CROSSROAD (*sung*)

PAPA SAM

(*wipes eyes to see if vision adjusts*) Me?

GHOST

You know, fear can tend to get in the way.

PAPA SAM

But how? (*still in disbelief*)

GHOST

Just because you don't believe doesn't mean it ain't so.

PAPA SAM

I can't believe it. There is no such—

GHOST

Fear and faith don't mix! When you overcome your fears...you will truly be free. (*PAPA SAM realizes that statement sounds familiar*) I live here too. Just with you is all. You drink a cup of coffee with a slice of wheat toast every mornin'...

PAPA SAM/ GHOST

And strawberry jam

(PAPA SAM begins to tremble)

GHOST

There's nobody here but you and me (*hissing*)

PAPA SAM

There ain't going to be nobody here but you, in just a minute.

(PAPA SAM jumps to his feet)

GHOST

LORD I'M SINKIN' DOWN (*sung*)

You know... I like you Sam. So, I'll be nice and give you a head start.

PAPA SAM

Don't have to tell me twice.

(PAPA SAM begins to run. He turns around and the GHOST catches up with him quickly.)

GHOST

You're making pretty good speed for an old man.

PAPA SAM

Oh, I can run faster than this! (*screams*) Never mind those watermelons.

(PAPA SAM runs out of the front door. GHOST beings to laugh)

GHOST

After while, crocodile! You sure can run Papa Sam!