JESSIE MAY WATTS

when they play Shreveport. *(Pause.)* I used to play baseball back at Bountiful. I used to rather play baseball than eat, when I was a kid.
JESSIE MAE. Come on, let's go to bed. *(She gets up. There is another screech of brakes.)* There goes another car smashed up. *(She stands next to Ludie still in the rocking chair.)* Nope, they missed each other. Six cars smashed up on the freeway to Galveston I read yesterday in the *Chronicle*. One right on top of another. I bet they were all drunk. Been down to Galveston. Gamblin', likely. I think the whole of Houston goes to Galveston gambling and drinking. Everybody but us. I don't see how some people hold down a job the ways they drink and gamble. Do you? *(Ludie gets up from the rocking chair and replaces the chair he used to sit next to his mother earlier. Jessie Mae stands next to him at the table.)*
LUDIE. No … I don't.
START → JESSIE MAE. That's why I told Rosella I could hardly keep from callin' up your boss and givin' him a piece of my mind for payin' you the salary he pays you. Like I said to Rosella, you're so steady and so conscientious and they just take advantage of your good nature. Maybe you're too steady, Ludie. *(A pause, Mrs. Watts goes into the bedroom and begins a systematic search for the recipe. To Ludie:)* Rosella was glad to hear you're workin' again. She said she was cleanin' out some drawers night before last and had come across some pictures of you and me she'd taken when we started goin' together. I said I don't care to see them. No, thank you. *(Mrs. Watts is looking, now, in Jessie Mae's dresser drawer. She finds the recipe.)* The passin' of time makes me sad. That's why I never want a house with the room to keep a lot of junk in to remind you of things you're better off forgetting. If we ever get any money you wouldn't catch me buying a house. I'd move into a hotel and have me room service. *(Mrs. Watts comes into the living room, holding the recipe.)* STOP
MRS. WATTS. Here's your recipe, Jessie Mae.
JESSIE MAE. Thank you, but I told you not to bother. Where did you find it? *(She takes the recipe.)*
MRS. WATTS. In your room.
JESSIE MAE. In my room?
MRS. WATTS. Yes, ma'am. *(She sits in the rocking chair.)*
JESSIE MAE. Where in my room?
MRS. WATTS. In your dresser drawer. Left-hand side.
JESSIE MAE. In my dresser drawer?
MRS. WATTS. Yes, Ma'am. I looked on top of the dresser and it wasn't there an' something said to me …

JESSIE MAY WATTS

JESSIE MAE. Mother Watts.
MRS. WATTS. Ma'am.
JESSIE MAE. Ludie, how many times have I asked her never to go into my dresser drawer?
MRS. WATTS. I thought you wanted me to find your recipe?
JESSIE MAE. Well, I don't want you to go into my dresser drawers. I'd like a little privacy if you don't mind.
MRS. WATTS. Yes Ma'am.
JESSIE MAE. And just let me never catch you looking in them again. For anything. I can't stand people snoopin' in my dresser drawers. *(Mrs. Watts grabs the paper from Jessie Mae and throws it on the floor. She is hurt and angry.)*
MRS. WATTS. All right. Then the next time you find it yourself.
JESSIE MAE. Pick that recipe up, if you please.
MRS. WATTS. Pick it up yourself. I have no intention of picking it up.
JESSIE MAE. *(Shouting.)* You pick that up!
MRS. WATTS. *(Shouting back.)* I won't.
LUDIE. Mama.
JESSIE MAE. *(Shouting even louder.)* You will!
LUDIE. Jessie Mae. For god sakes! You're both acting like children. It's one-thirty in the morning.
JESSIE MAE. You tell her to pick that up.
MRS. WATTS. I won't.
START→ JESSIE MAE. *(Screaming.)* You will! This is my house and you'll do as you're told. *(Ludie walks out of the room. He goes into his bedroom. Jessie Mae crosses to Mrs. Watts.)* Now, I hope you're satisfied. You've got Ludie good and upset. He won't sleep for the rest of the night. What do you want to do? Get him sick again? *(There is a knocking upstairs. Jessie Mae screams up at them.)* Shut up. *(To Mrs. Watts)* You're going to go too far with me one of these days, old lady. *(Jessie Mae walks out of the room. Mrs. Watts is ready to scream back at her, but she controls the impulse. She takes her anger out in rocking violently back and forth. Jessie Mae throws open the door to the bedroom and comes in. Ludie is sitting on the edge of the bed. She marches over to the vanity and sits.)* I just can't stand this, Ludie. I'm at the end of my rope. I won't take being insulted by your mother or anyone else. You hear that? *(Ludie rises and stands uncomfortably for a moment. He turns and goes out the bedroom door and into the living room. He stands by the living room door, looking at his mother. She stops her rocking. He picks up the recipe.)*