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# THESE HANDS



A 10-minute play by  
Floyd Stephen Alexander

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These Hands  
by Floyd Stephen Alexander

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**1W / 1M**

*FESS; a man who left his fishing roots to work the dirt on his own land*

*MAZY; his hard-working wife*

**SETTING**

*On the banks of the Louisiana bayou; the 1940's*

## These Hands

by Floyd Stephen Alexander

**SETTING:** *On the banks of the Louisiana bayou; the 1940's*

**AT RISE:** *FESS and MAZY work in a sugar cane field under the noonday sun.*

FESS

I figures we got two or three mo' hours cuttin' this cane an' we has enough stacked to go to market. Got to be more than \$300 to \$400 dollars come back to us.

MAZY

That be true, but the scale down at the market ain't been balanced in our favor ever'time we bring our sugar cane along with ever'body else. All around these parts, they is families bigger than ours an' got more ground than us. Our crop is just as good an' we 'spect to get the right share, pound fo' pound.

FESS

I got the remedy for that this time. I made me a scale from some iron pieces I found by the foundry and put some cane on it to see how it read. It read right like the scale down at the market. Now we goin' put what we done today on that scale an' write down what it weigh. The buyer can't have a number diff'ent from ours. Today, we get paid right. You see.

*MAZY stops her work and sits down on the ground.*

FESS

You al'right, Mazy?

MAZY

Fess, I got to say somethin' 'cause it ain't right for you to keep thinkin' I's with you without no doubt in my mind. Ever'time I come out here to this patch of ground we got, I get a feelin' that asks me: "Is this the day I don't get home? Is this were I'm goin' die?"

FESS

Woman, why you talkin' like that?! That kind a talk bring bad things down on our heads. We come out here ever'day an' you ain't died yet. You just tired, that's all. I been pushin' too hard. I'm sorry fo' doin that to you. You young an' stronger than any of them women they got in them big families. You prettier too.

MAZY

Don't be sweet talkin' me, now. I'm sweatin' out here like a' old horse an' I'm dirty as a' unwashed sack a' potatoes. Ain't nothin' pretty 'bout that!

*FESS stops his work and sits down next to MAZY.*

FESS

Look here, if I says you's pretty, you's pretty.

*FESS kisses MAZY and holds her close to him.*

FESS

I won't let misery get 'hold of you, honey. We have to be careful now that things turnin' our way. Misery just like a snake swimmin' in the water. It moves down slow an' easy. If you in that water an' not lookin', it'll sneak up an' bite you. I need you with me, Mazy. We didn't leave Saint Lucius so you can say this is where you come to die.

MAZY

I don't want to, but what is there left for me to think?! We make it through most times, then when the market see we gettin' up, it push us back down. It wasn't like that in Saint Lucius. I want to go home. I want to smell the sea air an' walk my feet on the sand. Let's take what we got..... an' go home.

FESS

*(Unmoved)* This our home, Mazy. This is where we need to be. In Saint Lucius, yes, we had sun an' white sand. Ever'mornin', noon an' night it was there. But don't forget 'bout bein' hungry, cold and people sayin' I'm not fit to be your husband'.

MAZY

I ain't never say that to you. I never listen to what they say 'bout you.

FESS

Your mamma an' papa say the fish never bite for me 'cause I had no papa to teach me. I not good for nothin' but choppin' fish heads an' clean up the waste. That be my life in Saint Lucius. You would have that life too as my wife. One day when I was sittin' alone, my auntie took my hand, opened it up an' ran her finger over my palm. She say I was not born to fish like the men on the island. I was born to work in the ground with the dirt on my hands. Not sand. She tell me to leave Saint Lucius an' find that ground. Ever' body say America got more ground to put your hands in an' make things grow bigger than your eyes can see.

**This is Not the End of the Play**  
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