

"You thinkin' while I'm talkin' to you?"

She say this like I'm burnin' hunnert dollar bills.

The buzzer ring. I wonder who it could be. Don't nobody ring our bell 'less it's crack addicts trying to get in the building. I hate crack addicts. They give the race a bad name.

"Go tell them assholes to stop ringing the bell," she say. She closer to the door than me but I mean my muver don't move 'less she has to. I mean that. When I go to answer the buzzer I realize I'm still grabbing the knife. I hate my muver sometimes. She is ugly I think sometime.

I press TALK on the intercom and holler, "Stop ringing the goddam buzzer mutherfucker!" and go back to the kitchen to finish the dishes.

The buzzer ring again. I go back. "Stop ringing the goddam buzzer," I say again. The mutherfucker ring again. "Stop it!" It ring *again*. "STOP IT!" I shout again. It ring again. My muver jump in and say, "Press LISTEN stupid!" I wanna say I ain' stupid but I know I am so I don't say nothin', 'cause also I don't want her to go hit me, 'cause I know from my hand in the dishwasher holding the butcher knife, I am through being hit. I am going to stab her she ever hit Precious Jones again. I press LISTEN. "It's Sondra Lichenstein for Claireece Jones and Ms Mary Johnston." *Mrs Lichenstein!* What that hoe want? She want me to hit her for real this time.

"Who that Precious?" my muver say. I say, "White bitch from school." "What she want?" my muver say. "I

don't know." "Ask her," my muver say. I press TALK 'n say, "What you want?" Then I press LISTEN and Mrs Lichenstein say, "I want to talk to you about your education." This bitch crazy. I was going to school everyday till her honky ass snatch me out the hall, fuck with my mind, make me go off on her, suspend me from school jus' because I'm pregnant—you know, *end up* my education. Now her white ass out on Lenox Avenue talkin' 'bout she wanna talk to me about my education. Lord where is crack addicts when you need 'em. "What all this about Precious?" my muver asks. My muver don't want no white shit like Mrs Lichenstein social worker teacher ass nosing around here. My muver don't want to get cut off, welfare that is. And that's what white shit like Mrs Lichenstein comin' to visit result in. If I wasn't pregnant and having trouble with the stairs, I run down and kick her ass. My muver say, "Eighty-six that bitch." I says into the intercom, "Hasta la vista, baby." That's Spanish for good-bye but when niggers say it, it's like, kiss my ass. Ring go buzzer again. I don't believe this retarded hoe. I press TALK 'n say, "Git outta here Mrs Lichenstein 'fore I kick your ass." The bell go ring. I press LISTEN. "Claireece I am so sorry about Thursday. I had only wanted to help you. I . . . Mr Wicher says you're one of his best students, that you have an aptitude for math." She pause like she thinking what to say next, then she say, "I've called a Ms McKnight at Higher Education Alternative/Each One Teach One. It's an alternative school." She pause again, say, "Claireece, are you listening?" I