

JAZZ: HURTING

*Herald flies in.*

HERALD

Whoa! I think we're safe. Good job grabbing booze back there. Ezra's second location is real close. Man, it's not easy running a speakeasy in the 1920s.

*You and the fellas finally lose the cops. Ya'll take a moment to catch your breath.*

*Percy is struggling.*

EZRA

You good Percy?

PERCY

(Still struggling)

I'll be a'ight.

BENNY

(A deeper breath)

Come on ya'll we gotta get to the other spot / before...

*A bottle breaks.*

EZRA

Ahhh! A'int that the business.

BENNY

We're good we got / plenty down by...

EZRA

Nah! All of it! It ain't right. They ain't right. I ain't done nothing to bother them. Why my joint? My spot ain't hurting no body.

BENNY

Ezra! Ezra, man focus.

EZRA

Am I wrong, Benny? They didn't care about me poisoning ya'll with the whiskey or gin. Wasn't the jazz. It's cuz they found out too many of your white brothers and sisters are LOOKING for *our* whiskey and *our* gin, *our* music to have a good time—Coloured man can't have nothing.

(Beat)

What am I supposed to do man? / I keep my head down. I can't go no lower.

BENNY

We're not supposed to know, man. We gotta / just keep moving...

EZRA

Yeah yeah.

*We can hear Dotty singing.*

BENNY

Is that Dotty? We must be close.

*Percy half hums along.*

PERCY

My mama used to sing this song. This brother and sister saw how messed up the world is and chose to never wake up. The brother stayed in his dream because he had control over all the beautiful things. And the sister was screaming horrible things in her sleep. Stuck in a nightmare all because she forgot how to open her eyes. They didn't realize the world was moving on without them.

EZRA

(To you)

He doing a lot of talking for someone that couldn't breathe earlier.

PERCY

The world is moving forward and can't nobody do nothing about it. At least you're awake.

BENNY

You got me and other white cats that can blow, choosing your joint over the nice hotels. That's waking some people up.

PERCY

The one's sleep walking 'gon be hurting when the future shake 'em. Even if they don't wake up, they're gonna dream different. A restless sleep.

*They are approaching the small crowd pulled into the healing song. They hear the final healing note.*

EZRA

Alright! Quit your preaching. Coloured people make church outta anything.

MUSICIAN

Hey! Ezra's here!

ANOTHER MUSICIAN

He got the Booze!

HERALD

Oh you just missed something amazing! Ask your friend about Dotty and how to look cool at a speakeasy.

END OF PLAY.