



## "'Let's do something' Frieda said."

---

No Known Copyright

Princeton University Library reasonably believes that the Item is not restricted by copyright or related rights, but a conclusive determination could not be made.

You are free to use this Item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use.

## Princeton University Library Disclaimer

---

Princeton University Library claims no copyright governing this digital resource. It is provided for free, on a non-commercial, open-access basis, for fair-use academic and research purposes only. Anyone who claims copyright over any part of these resources and feels that they should not be presented in this manner is invited to contact Princeton University Library, who will in turn consider such concerns and make every effort to respond appropriately. We request that users reproducing this resource cite it according the guidelines described at <http://rbcs.princeton.edu/policies/forms-citation>.

## Citation Information

---

Morrison, Toni. 1931-

"'Let's do something' Frieda said."

1 folder

## Contact Information

---

## Download Information

---

Date Rendered: 2019-09-05 12:36:16 PM UTC

Available Online at: <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/gb19fb37v>

"Let's do something" Frieda said.

"What you want to do?" I asked.

"I don't know" said Frieda. "Nothing."

~~We were quiet for a while.~~ <sup>She stood</sup> Frieda standing at the tops of the trees. Eunice looked at her feet.

"You want to go up to Mr. Shelby's room and look at his magazines?"

Frieda made an ugly face. She didn't like to look at dirty pictures.

"Well", I continued "we could look at his Bible. that's pretty."

Frieda sucked her teeth and made a pfft sound with her lips. ~~meaning~~

"<sup>OK-then</sup> ~~What~~ we could go thread needles for the half-blind lady. She'll give us a penny."

Frieda snorted. "Her eyes look like shot. I don't want to look at them." "What you want to do Eunice?"

"I don't care" she said. "Anything you want."

I had another idea. "We could go up the alleys & see what's in the ~~garbage~~ <sup>trash</sup> cans." "Too cold" Frieda was bored and ~~the~~ <sup>irritable</sup>.

"I know" we could make some fudge!"

"You kidding. With Mama in there fussing? When she starts ~~talking~~ fussing at the walls



90 N/A  
You know she's <sup>gonna</sup> be at it all day. She  
wouldn't even let us "

"Well let's go over to the Greek Hotel  
and listen to them cues."  
Oh, <sup>who wants to do that?</sup> ~~uh~~. Besides they say the same old  
words all of the time."

My supply of ideas ~~was~~ exhausted, I  
began ~~and~~ concentrate on the white spots  
on my fingernails. ~~Each one~~ <sup>the total</sup> signified  
the number of boy friends I wanted to have.  
Seven. (Insert)

~~The morning was sluggish.~~

Suddenly Eunice ~~stood~~ <sup>straight</sup> bolted up.  
Her ~~face~~ <sup>mouth</sup> ~~wide~~ ~~and~~ eyes wide with terror.  
A whinnying sound came from her mouth.

"What's the matter with you?" Frieda  
stood up too.

So we both ~~then~~ <sup>where</sup> looked ~~at~~ <sup>what</sup> E.  
was staring. Blood was ~~dripping~~ <sup>running</sup>  
down her legs. Some was on the wooden  
step. I leaped up. "Hey! You cut  
yourself? Look. It's all over your dress!"

<sup>Oh, dear! Blood was staining over her dissection the blood of hardness!</sup>  
She kept whinnying. Standing with  
her legs far apart ~~the~~

Frieda said "Oh, lordy, I know.  
I know what is!"



"Ministations"  
"Yeah, you"

"What?" Eunice's finger went to her mouth

"What's  
Ministation?"

"Am I going to die?" She asked.

"No." you want die. It just means  
you can have a baby."

"What?"

"How do you know?" I asked  
~~who told you?~~

"Mildred told me, own mama for"

"I don't believe it"

"You don't have to Dummy. Look. wait  
here. Sit down Eunice Right here."

Frieda was all authority and rest.

"And you" she said to me "Go get some  
water"

"Water?"

"Yeah <sup>es</sup> Dummy water" and Be quiet  
or Mama will hear you"

Eu. Sat down again a little less  
fear in her eyes. I went into the  
Kitchen.

"What you want, girl?" <sup>Mama</sup> ~~my mother~~  
was <sup>Rinsing curtains</sup> ~~filling~~ <sup>in the sink.</sup>

"Some water, ma'm"

"Right where I'm working, <sup>NATURALLY</sup> ~~of course~~"  
Well get a glass. Not to clean one  
either. Use that jar."

I got ~~the~~ <sup>Amazon</sup> jar and filled it with



water from the faucet. It seemed  
never to fill.

"Don't nobody never want nothing  
till they see me at the sick. Then  
every body got to drink water ..."

The jar full I moved to ~~the~~ leave  
the room.

"Where you going?"

"Outside"

"Drink that water right here!"

"I aint gonna break nothing"

"You dont know that"

"Yes mam. I do. Lemme take it out  
I won't spill none"

"~~You~~ <sup>you</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> 'not"  
~~Will~~ <sup>hurry</sup> on up there"

I got to the porch and stood there  
with the mason jar of water. Eunice  
was crying.

"What you crying for? Does it hurt?"  
She shook her head.

"Then stop slinging snot"

Frieda opened the back door. She had  
something tucked in ~~the~~ her blouse.

She looked at me in amazement.

"What's that <sup>and pointed to the jar</sup> supposed to do?"

"You told me. You said get some water"

"Wat a little also ~~jar~~ full. Lots of water!"



to scrub up the steps Dumbbell!

"How would I know?"

"~~that~~ Yeah, How would you?" "Come on!"

She pulled E. up by the arm. "Let's go back here." They headed for the side of the house ~~and~~ where the bushes hid everything from view.

"Hey, what about me? I want to go."

"Shut up!" Frieda said "Mama will hear. You wash the steps!" They disappeared around the corner of the house.

I was ~~angry~~ going to miss something again. Here was something important and I had to stay behind and not see.

I poured the ~~jar~~ of water on the steps. I soaked it with my foot and ran to join them.

Frieda was on her knees. A white rectangle of cotton was near her on the ground. She was pulling E. pants off. "Come on. Step out of them."

She managed to get the soiled pants down. & Flung them at me.

"Here!"

"What am I supposed to do with them?"



"Bury them, moron"

I picked up the panties with two fingers.  
and looked about for something to dig  
a hole with.

Frieda ~~was~~ <sup>told E. to hold the cotton thing</sup> ~~pinning~~  
between her legs

"How" she gonna walk like that? I asked  
Frieda didn't answer. I understood she  
took two safety pins from the hem of  
her dress and began to pin the  
ends of the ~~cotton~~ S. napkin to E. Press,

→ I heard a <sup>rattling</sup> noise in the bushes <sup>started me</sup> and,  
<sup>turning forward,</sup> I ~~caught a glimpse of~~ <sup>saw</sup> a pair of fascinated  
eyes in a dough-white face. Rosemary.  
She was watching us. I grokked for  
her face & succeeded in scratching her  
nose. She screamed & jumped back.

"Miss W. Miss W." She hollered  
Frieda + Claudia are not here playing  
nasty! "Miss W."

Mama opened the window and  
looked down at us.

"What?"

"They're playing nasty Mr. W. Look.  
+ Claudia hit me cause I seen them!"



Mama slammed the window shut & came running out the back door.

"What you doing? Oh. uh. huh. uh huh. Phoying, wasty huh?" She reached into the bushes & pulled off a switch "I'd rather raise pigs than some wasty girls - LEAST I CAN SLAUGHTER THEM."

"We began to shriek. No Mam No Mam we was it, She's a Lion. No Mam Mama! No Man Mara!"

Mama grabbed Frieda by the shoulder, turned her round & gave her 3 or 4 stinging cuts on her legs,

"Gonna be wasty huh? Now you ain't! Frieda was destroyed. She hated whippings - they <sup>both</sup> ~~wounded~~ <sup>+ insulted</sup> her. ~~her~~

Mama ~~then~~ looked at E.

"You too" she said "Child of mine or not."

She grabbed E. & ~~formed~~ <sup>spun</sup> he around, the pin snapped open on one end of the napkin & Mama saw it fall from under her dress. The switch hovered in the air. Mama ~~looked~~ blinked, then looked at E.'s face.

"What the devil is going on?"

Frieda was sobbing.



I, next in line, began to explain.  
"She was bleeding - he was just trying  
to stop the blood"

Mama looked at Frieda for verification.  
Frieda nodded. "She ~~must~~  
he was just helping."

Mama released E. <sup>She started looking after</sup> she pulled <sup>sobbing</sup> Frieda  
to her. She ~~pressed~~ <sup>pressed</sup> her head <sup>against</sup> her stomach  
& patted her. Her <sup>eyes</sup> face were sorry.

"Ok. Ok. Now stop crying. I didn't  
know." Come on <sup>now</sup>, "Get in <sup>on</sup> the horse."

"Go on home, Rosemary. The show is over."

We dropped in Frieda sobbing quietly,  
E. <sup>carrying</sup> ~~frustrating~~ a white tail, me <sup>carrying</sup> ~~with~~  
the <sup>little girl - go to women</sup> panties.

Inside me

Mama led us to the bathroom. She  
prodded E. inside & <sup>talking the whole time some me</sup> told ~~Frieda~~ ~~me~~ us  
to stay out.

We could hear water running into  
the bath tub.

"You think she's going to drown her"? I  
asked.

"Now Claudia - you so dumb" She  
just said to wash her clothes and all."

The water gushed and over it  
gushing we could hear the music of mama's



laughter.

Later, that night in bed. The three  
of us lay still. ~~Not wanting to break~~  
~~the baby silence~~. We were full of  
awe & respect for E. Lying next to  
a real person who was really memorable.  
was ~~somehow sacred~~. She was different from  
now - grown. She herself felt ~~the~~ distance  
But refused to load it on us.

After a <sup>short</sup> while she spoke very softly  
"Is it true that I can have a baby now?"  
"Sure" said Drieda <sup>drumily</sup> "Sure you can."  
"But - how?" Her voice was hollow  
with wonder.

"Oh." said Drieda "Somebody has to  
love you."

"Oh" said E.

Here <sup>was</sup> another pause in which we both thought this over.  
"Then" E. asked ~~the~~ question that had ~~come~~ <sup>never</sup> <sup>entered</sup> my mind.  
~~But how can you get~~ <sup>do you do that?</sup> ~~somebody to~~  
love you?" ~~Elmared~~

But Drieda was ~~also~~ asleep. And  
I didn't know.

Involvement  
I ~~don't~~ <sup>probably</sup>  
"My son" who,  
before turning  
me, and  
lost me, ~~the~~  
a baby  
But ~~there~~  
when it's  
babies, I ~~was~~  
saw my  
mother's song.  
Maybe that was  
why the woman  
was 500 -  
then in an  
later without  
asking a baby.