



Sp. W

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-

Sp. W

1 folder (partial)

Contact Information

Download Information

Date Rendered: 2019-09-05 01:03:03 PM UTC

Available Online at: <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/sn00b334m>

Sp. W

36

May 16, 2000

since 1978. Well, she ^{I do} does like those peppermint sticks at Christmas.

She ^I walked three miles to Café Ria for X years—then ^{my} her feet swole up

and she quit again. Maceo, who saw his life's work as empty as the

rickety tables, ^{he} drove to Up Beach to persuade ^{me} her once more to save

him. Now he picks ^{me} her up everyday and ^I sits in a high chair with

wheels, scooting from stove to sink to cutting table. ^{my} Her feet are OK

now but ^{I'm} she's used to the wheel transportation and won't give it up.

She's through talking too. Says it ^{me} wears her out. So a

conversation with ^{me} her is mostly you talking while she hums. Not loud,

though. ^{When hum} L hums softly and ^{most people} you feel encouraged by this background

music and tell her all you know or heard of. Anybody who remembers

what ^{my real name is} the L stands for is dead by now and its hopeless to inquire.

Even children—who have a world of time to waste—don't ask ^{me} her

anymore. Some said it was short for Ellen, or Ellie or Elvira ^{folks think its} but can't

anybody recall a time when she didn't take the usher's pencil and sign

^{my} her tithe envelopes with an L. ^{Anyway they finally they} We gave up. Like we gave up calling

Maceo's Maceo's, or ^{adding} supplying the missing letters. Café Ria is what

Others ^{from} guess its Ellen or Elvira ^{they} hearing people ^{mention or} call out my name

I'd just as soon
keep it that
way.

May 16, 2000

it's known as. And ^{I'm} ~~A~~ ^{ing} glides there still. | ~~STET~~

Women in love like the place a lot. Over iced tea with a clove in it, they join girl friends to repeat what he said, describe what he did and guess what he meant by any of it.

He didn't call me for three days and when I called him he wanted to get together right then! See? He wouldn't do that if he didn't want to be with you. Oh, please. When I got there we had a long talk and for the first time he really listened to me. Sure he did. Why not? All he had to do was wait til you shut up then he could work his own tongue. I thought he was seeing what's her name. No, they split. You lying! He asked me to move in. Sign the paper first, honey. I don't want anybody but him. It's like that huh? Well no joint accounts, hear? You want porgies, or not?"

They spice the lunch hour and lift the spirits of broken-hearted men eavesdropping at nearby tables.

^{We don't have}
~~There are no~~ waitresses at Café Ria. The food is displayed in steam trays, and after your plate is heaped you take it to the cash

May 16, 2000

register for cost analysis done by Maceo, his wife or one of his no-count sons.

The girl--she called herself ^{Junior} ~~Toby~~ came in one Sunday just before church let out. She walked the length of the steam table checking the

menu with the kind of eyes you see on those "Save This Child" commercials. ^{I had} L, her work finished and ^{was} waiting for Maceo; ^{resting by the sink} was blowing

cool air on ^{my} a cup of pot liquor before dipping ^{the} her bread in. Through

the kitchen door--^{it. I could see Junior the girl} never closed--she ~~saw Toby~~ pacing before the food

trays--like a panther or some such. The big hair Sandler Gibson saw

was gone. Tk And although the leather jacket still covered her upper

half, the skirt was a see-through, flowery thing swinging just above her ^{the its hem}

boots. ^{the toes of}

One of Maceo's no-count boys ^{leaned up against the wall} waited while ^{the girl} ~~Toby~~ made up her

mind. He never opened his lips to say good afternoon may I help you?

anything in particular? or any of the welcoming things you're supposed

to greet customers with. L ¹ ~~said she?~~ just cooled her liquid and ^{my} ~~just~~ ^{just}

watched to see which one would behave normal first.

May 16, 2000

~~She~~ ^{She} ~~Toby~~ ^{she} did. ~~customer lines started forming. Theo was dribbling air~~

Her order must have been for herself and Heed because Christine is a champion cook. Anyway she chose three sides, two meats, one rice pudding and one chocolate cake. Maceo's boy, Theo they call him, smirking more than usual, moved from the ^{will} cash register to load up the styrofoam plate, ^{sloppy - mean or both, he} ~~carelessly or deliberately~~ letting the stewed tomatoes slide over the compartments to discolor the potato salad, ^{and} forking ^{ed} the barbecue on top of the gravied chicken. ("Only dark meat," she'd said.) ^I got so heated watching Theo disrespect ^{my} her food she dropped ^{the} her bread into ^{my} her cup where it disintegrated like sand.

^{Junior} Toby never took her eyes off the ^{trays} food. Never met Theo's eyes until he gave her change at the register. Then she looked right at him and said "I expect you do better with a posse. You seem kind of helpless by yourself."

Theo said something ^{hateful} mean to her back but it fell flat with no ^{there} audience in sight to enjoy it. ^{body} ~~teenagers~~

When Maceo walked in, ready to bundle ^{me} ~~me~~ into his car and get ^{me} her

May 16, 2000

the after church
home before ~~customer~~ lines started forming, Theo was dribbling air
balls in his dream court behind the register *Like* as if he'd just been signed
by the X and a cereal company too.