

MARIAN SIDE 1

Act one

Lights up on Albert Einstein and Marian Anderson, who have just entered through the back door. Einstein is hauling Anderson's luggage—a large suitcase, covered with stickers from around the world. He wears an old overcoat and shoes with no socks. His hair is an unholy mess. It looks like it hasn't been combed in days—weeks maybe. Anderson, elegantly dressed in a tailored coat, lace gloves and a traveling hat, is carrying a small suitcase and a hatbox. Einstein puts down the trunk and closes the door.

START:

EINSTEIN
Here we are, at last!

ANDERSON
My Lord, what a night!

EINSTEIN
Are you all right, Miss Anderson?

ANDERSON
I'm still shaking.

EINSTEIN
It's no wonder! That philistine at the Nassau Inn behaved like a brute! Turning you away like that and in such a course manner.

ANDERSON
Yes, it was most unpleasant.

EINSTEIN
I'm so sorry you had to suffer that indignity.

ANDERSON
Unfortunately, I am quite used to it.

EINSTEIN
Does this sort of thing happen often?

ANDERSON
Often enough. However, I'm more accustomed to receiving rough treatment in the southern states. I didn't expect to find it quite so pronounced here in the north, and certainly not in such an enlightened community as Princeton.

EINSTEIN
Princeton? Enlightened? *(Snorts.)* The people of Princeton are not enlightened!

ANDERSON
No?

EINSTEIN

No. They are wealthy. There is a difference. Unfortunately, your country makes the mistake of equating the two. Do you know whom the students at our esteemed university voted as the greatest living person?

ANDERSON

Who?

EINSTEIN

Adolph Hitler.

ANDERSON

Good Lord.

EINSTEIN

It's a sad world in which such people are allowed to play first fiddle. Here. Let me take your coat.

(He helps her off with her coat.)

ANDERSON

It's so kind of you to invite me to stay here, Professor Einstein. I can't thank you enough.

EINSTEIN

The pleasure is mine!

ANDERSON

I honestly don't know what I would have done if you hadn't escorted me to the hotel tonight.

EINSTEIN

I was afraid I was imposing myself on you a bit too forcefully...

ANDERSON

Oh, not at all!

EINSTEIN

But I simply had to meet you after that performance! I am a member of your admiring public, Miss Anderson. The day your concert was announced, I was the first person in Princeton to purchase a ticket!

ANDERSON

Were you?

EINSTEIN

Oh yes. You sing Schubert better than a German!

ANDERSON

That is high praise!

EINSTEIN

I have been an admirer of yours for many years...

ANDERSON

The feeling is mutual. I can't wait to tell Mother that I met the great Albert Einstein!

EINSTEIN

And I'm going to put up a plaque! "The Great Marian Anderson slept here!" I'm going to give your George Washington a little competition. What do you think? *(He laughs like a barking seal.)* Ha! Ha! **END**

ANDERSON

(Chuckles.)

EINSTEIN

I'm afraid that my living quarters are as rumbled as I am. *(Gestures to the mess in the room.)* As you can see, I live like a bear in a cave!

ANDERSON

It's obvious that a great mind is at work in here!

EINSTEIN

Or a very nutty one! I spend most of my time voyaging through strange seas of thought, Miss Anderson.

ANDERSON

(Referring to the piles of papers.) Are these your equations?

EINSTEIN

They are. And these... *(referring to crumpled papers on the floor)* ...are my mistakes! *(He laughs—like a barking seal.)* Ha! Ha! As you can see, I make many of them! The Institute at Princeton is gambling on me as they would on a prize-winning hen. But I don't know if I can still lay eggs! *(Barking laugh.)* Ha! Ha! *(Pause. More seriously.)* I find myself in the uncomfortable position of being the world's leading authority on scientific matters...

ANDERSON

You don't like it?

MARIAN SIDE 2

My Lord, What a Night/November 11, 2018 Orlando revisions

The right-wing article that was published yesterday has unleashed a wave of negative publicity. My name is being dragged through the streets. The whole situation is threatening to destroy my tour.

EINSTEIN

Is there no level to which those reptiles will not stoop?!

ANDERSON

Apparently not.

(Einstein turns and stares out the window.)

TERRELL

(To Anderson.) You realize, I hope, that this makes our protest more important than ever. It will bring attention to the Daughter's actions against you.

ANDERSON

I'm not interested in bringing attention to the Daughters, Mrs. Terrell.

TERRELL

What do you propose to do instead?

ANDERSON

Stay above the fray and maintain my dignity and composure.

FLEXNER

That's the best approach! It will take you much farther.

START:

ANDERSON

If ever there were a time for racial *uplift*, it is now. It is not a time for racial *protest*.

TERRELL

One can protest with grace and dignity, Miss Anderson. I do it all the time. And I find nothing more uplifting—or invigorating—than a good protest march! Don't you agree Professor Einstein?

EINSTEIN

(Distracted.) Uh, yes...I suppose.

TERRELL

(To Anderson.) Colored people everywhere are looking to you for guidance.

ANDERSON

All the more reason to conduct myself appropriately.

TERRELL

(Gently.) Miss Anderson, ignoring this situation will not make it go away.

ANDERSON

I'm not ignoring it. I'm choosing not to dignify it with a response.

TERRELL

If you do nothing, then the Daughter's version of events will prevail.

ANDERSON

People will believe what they want to believe. A response from me will not change a thing.

TERRELL

You underestimate your influence, Miss Anderson.

ANDERSON

A battle with the DAR is not a battle I can win.

TERRELL

Well, the colored community does not agree with that position. I just spoke with Walter White at the NAACP.

ANDERSON

The NAACP? What do they have to do with this?

TERRELL

They are now members of the steering committee.

ANDERSON

Since when?

TERRELL

Since this morning. They have come up with a promising plan.

ANDERSON

Mrs. Terrell, I do not wish for the NAACP, or anyone else, to act on my behalf.

TERRELL

They're not acting on *your* behalf, Miss Anderson. They are acting on behalf of *Colored Americans*.

ANDERSON

I am not unsympathetic to the conditions facing my people, but this must stop! I insist that my name not be used to advance a political agenda!

TERRELL

This matter is bigger than you!

ANDERSON

Yes, because you and the committee are making it so!

TERRELL

Oh no! Something profound has been awakened! Something that is bigger than all of us!

ANDERSON

This was a simple dispute over a concert booking that you have turned into a national controversy.

TERRELL

You have become a symbol.

ANDERSON

I am not a *symbol*. I am a singer.

TERRELL

No, you are a symbol. A powerful symbol. And to your Negro brethren you have become a *sacred* cause!

ANDERSON

Once again, you are overstating matters!

TERRELL

Oh no, this one strikes at something much deeper. Don't you see?

ANDERSON

Apparently not!

TERRELL

This is the moment we've been waiting for! Miss Anderson, we believe the injustice you have suffered at Constitution Hall has the power to ignite a large-scale civil-rights movement in America. **END**

(Einstein, who still stands at the window, snaps back to attention momentarily.)

EINSTEIN

Do you really think so Mrs. Terrell?

TERRELL

I know so. Everyone else does too.

ANDERSON