

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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Mirandy and Brother Wind

Based on the Book by
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Adapted by
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Libretto by
Michael J. Bobbitt

Music and Lyrics by
John L. Cornelius

Mirandy and Brother Wind was first presented by Adventure Theatre in 2011.

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Setting:

In and about Ridgetop, South Carolina, a rural Southern town, 1906. *The set should evoke the gorgeous colors and textures of the book. Simple pieces can be used to suggest specific locations. (Example: one bed – Mirandy’s room; a single screen door – Daddy’s henhouse.)*

Characters:

(NOTE: Actors may double roles, child roles can be played by adult or child actors. The whole cast is African-American. An ensemble can be added.)

Mirandy - a precocious, feisty girl, 10-12

Ezel - the clumsiest boy in town, 10-12

Grandmama Beasley - Mirandy's Grandmother, 50-60

Ma Dear/Mis Poinsettia - Mirandy's Mother/a Conjure Woman, 25-40

Brother Wind/Mr. Jessup - the Wind; young and playful at heart/a townsman, 25- 40

Orlinda, Mirandy's rival, 10-12

Monroe, Orlinda’s dance partner 10-12

Song List:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| 1. | SPRING ISHERE | All |
| 2. | ORLINDA AND MONROE | Orlinda and Monroe |
| 3A. | SPRING FEVER | Townfolk |
| 3B. | WARMTH AND HEALTH | Grandmama Beasley, Townfolk |
| 4. | CAKE WALK | Mirandy |
| 5. | LEGEND OF BROTHER WIND | Ma Dear, Mr. Jessup, Grandmama Beasley |
| 6. | I WANNA DANCE WITH THE WIND | Mirandy, Mr. Jessup, Mis Poinsettia, All |
| 8. | COTTON | Grandmama Beasley |
| 9. | GRANDMAMA BEASLEY SINGS
(GO TO SLEEPY, LITTLE BABY) | Grandmama Beasley |
| 10. | CAIN’T NOBODY CATCH ME | Brother Wind |
| 11A. | ON A MISSION | Townfolk |
| 11C. | PEPPER | Instrumental |
| 11B. | HOW BOUT’ A TRADE? | Ezel, Mirandy |
| 12. | WHIRLING WORDS | Mis Poinsettia, Hoo Doo Dancers |
| 13. | WHAT DO I DO NOW? | Mirandy |
| 14. | HAMBONE-JUBA | Townfolk, Grandmama Beasley,
Ma Dear, Orlinda |
| 15a. | THE CAKE ARRIVE
– ORLINDA & MONROE | Instrumental |
| 15b. | MIRANDY & EZEL DANCE – FINALE | All |

(Outside, in the center of town. Several front yards connect to each other. Folk enter and dance with the hustle and bustle of springtime activity. Grandmama Beasley plays checkers with Mr. Jessup.)

MA DEAR (*Mirandy's Mother*)
HANGIN' WASH ON THE LINE,
SMELLIN' CLEAN AN' FRESH AS PINE -
SPRING IS HERE. SPRING IS HERE.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY (*Mirandy's Grandmother*)
BRAND-NEW SHIRT, BRAND NEW DRESS;
RINSE AN' DRY AN' FOLD, AN' PRESS.
SPRING IS HERE. SPRING IS HERE.

BOTH
THE AIR IS HEATING.
GOATS IS BLEATING.
IT'S ALL WORTH REPEATING:
SPRING IS HERE!

ORLINDA (*Mirandy's Rival*)
WINTER DUST FLEE FROM HERE.
AIN'TCHA GLAD THAT SPRING IS NEAR?

MA DEAR, GRANDMAMA BEASLEY
AIN'TCHA HEARD?
SPRING IS HERE.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY
YOUNG HEARTS COME SKIPPIN' THROUGH.
OLDER HEARTS GO PRANCIN', TOO.

ALL THREE
SPRING IS HERE. SPRING IS HERE.

PLANTING FLOWERS,
SUNLIT HOURS.
GREEN THINGS GROW
WITH APRIL SHOWERS.

MONROE (*a young boy, the best dancer in Ridgetop*)
(running in) HELP ME. HIDE ME.
THAT CRAZY GIRL, ORLINDA,
TRYIN' TO PUT A KISSIN' ON ME.

ORLINDA

Yoo, hoo. Monroe! It's Spring!

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Monroe, what are you hiding around me for? Do I look like somebody's oak tree?

MONROE

Yes, Ma'am.

MS. GENEVA

I ain't got time for none of your foolin'. We got work to do.

SPRINGTIME DONE COME.

ORLINDA

(offstage) 7-8-9-10. Ready or not, here I come. *(enters)* First one I catch has to marry me.

MONROE

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!
DAT ORLINDA GOT THE
SPRINGTIME IN HER EYES.

ORLINDA

ORLINDA AND MONROE,
SITTIN' IN A TREE
K-I-S-S-I-N-G.
FIRST COME LOVE,
THEN COME MARRIAGE,
THEN COME ORLINDA WITH A BA...

MA DEAR

HUSH YO' MOUTH, CHILE.
THEM IS GROWN-UP WORDS YOU SPEAKIN'
WHAT YOU KNOW 'BOUT THEM WORDS?

ORLINDA

IT'S SPRING!
THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW.
AN' MONROE AN' ME IS
GETTIN' MARRIED...

...as soon as I can catch him. Y'awl invited - over by the poplar tree. It's gonna be...

THE BEST SPRING WEDDING
RIDGETOP HAS EVER SEEN.

MONROE

I hate the Springtime. ...make people crazy. (*He runs off.*)

ORLINDA

Crazy about you, Monroe.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY (*to MA DEAR*)

I THINK THAT GIRL
STILL GOT THE FEVER.
YOU GET THE SULFER,
YOU GET MOLASSES.
I'LL GET THE COD LIVER OIL.

MA DEAR

That ain't gonna cure what's ailing her.

SHE GOT THE SPRING FEVER.
YOU KNOW -

OTHER WOMEN

THE BIRDS AN' THE BEES AN'
THE FLOWERS AN' THE TREES.

THE BIRDS AN' THE BEES AN'
THE FLOWERS AN' THE TREES.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Speakin' of which, have you laid eyes on Mr. Jessup?

MR. JESSUP (*entering, with a bale of cotton*)

One bale down! Woo, 1906 and we still pickin' cotton. (*He exits.*)

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Yes, ma'am. I betcha he could slaughter a nice fat hog.

MA DEAR

YOU GOT THE
SPRING FEVER, TOO.

Has anybody seen Mirandy? She was supposed to help me hang out the laundry.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

I ain't seen that girl in a month of Sundays. That's all I gots to say. Except...that child wander about here and there, like a chicken with its head cut off.

MA DEAR

She do fancy the Spring - rolling down the hill until she gets all kinda sick.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Why that child get all twisted in the britches over Spring? Winter is where it's at.

MR. JESSUP

Running to the outhouse on a dead cold night...no sir.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

The cold is Old Man Winter's way of bringing the family together. Huddled around the stove, trying to keep warm is good for you. It make you talk to one another. Winter means family.

MR. JESSUP

Yes indeed, and Grandmama Beasley's ice cream made out of freshly dropped snow.

MA DEAR

And the very next day, you wake up with a sore throat.

SPRINGTIME IS
WARMTH AND HEALTH
SPRINGTIME IS
FEELING GOOD.
SPRINGTIME IS
FEELING CLOSE AN'
SPENDIN' TIME AN'

ALL OTHERS
(*echo*)

ALL
TREATIN' YO' NEIGHBORS
LIKE YOU SHOULD!
SPRING IS HERE!
SPRING IS HERE!
SPRING IS...

MR. JESSUP (*who has also been playin' checkers with GRANDMAMA BEASLEY, as they do their chores.*)
KING ME!
CROWN ME!

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

You cheatin' fool!

(*MR. JESSUP dances.*)

MA DEAR

Try dancin' like that in the winter...

(*MA DEAR exits. MONROE enters.*)

ORLINDA

Monroe, you're back!

MONROE (*entering, trying to keep away from Orlinda*)

Now, I done told you a thousand times. I ain't gonna marry you, Orlinda. Why don't you go marry Ezel?

ORLINDA

That clumsy boy? How he gonna walk me down the aisle?

(*EZEL enters. He trips.*)

EZEL

I'm OK. I'm OK.

MONROE

At least it won't be hard to catch *him*.

ORLINDA (*with a doll in her arms*)

Marry me, Monroe! Think about the baby!

MONROE

Ahhhhh! (*Runs offstage.*)

MR. JESSUP (*entering with a bale of cotton*)

Two! That's two bales of cotton. One day, somebody gonna pay me a lot more for doin' for this work.

EZEL

Where is Mirandy? I picked this here Johnny Quill for her.

MR. JESSUP

I bet she at the hen house that her daddy built - what she love so much.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Maybe she down by the brook, seeing how fast the tadpoles swim.

EZEL

Or maybe out by the garden, diggin' up sassafras root for sun tea.

MR. JESSUP

We all should be with her, taking in the Spring. We is free from frost. Free to play and run!

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

'Course now, summer is just around the bend. The watermelon haulin', plowing the field all day and, of course, the cotton pickin'.

MR. JESSUP (*entering, with a bale of cotton*)

I picked it all! Ain't no more cotton in North or South Carolina!

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Sure, we ain't free from work and strife, but at least we are working for our *own* families.

TOWNFOLKS

Yes, Ma'am.

(The town folk celebrate and hug.)

MIS POINSETTIA *(entering)*

Boo!

(MR. JESSUP drops his checker. MIS POINSETTIA dances around the checker and chants. Everybody stops and cautiously watch.)

You dropped your checker.

(Everyone cowers. She exits.)

MR. JESSUP

She don't put a hex on my checker.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

You need to rub some onion on that!

MIRANDY *(entering)*

Hey everybody! It's Spring.

MR. JESSUP

I think you the one who forgot. We got work to do. That's what Spring mean in Ridgetop.

MIRANDY

It also mean the annual junior cakewalk, tomorrow night.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

But today we got work to do. You was supposed to help your momma hang out the washin'.

MIRANDY

But, I been waitin' on this since last year - practicing everyday for the big prize.

MA DEAR *(entering)*

Well, your dancin' feet don't have nothin' to do with your workin' hands. Pick up the end of that bedsheet.

MIRANDY

Gotta save my strength for the dance. Look, it says right here. The winner gets a triple decker cake...umm...ummm...sweet vanilla icing. Come on, Grandmama Beasley, show me that step you and Grandpa won with.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Girl, a hard head make a soft behind. Did you get the water from the well?

MIRANDY

It's Spring, Ma Dear...too much time wasted sweepin' the front yard, nailing shoes on the mule and planting seeds.

MA DEAR

Well girl, how you gonna eat if you don't plant the seeds?

“CAKEWALK”
(Mirandy)

MIRANDY

By winnin' that cake.

THERE'S GONNA BE A CAKEWALK
THIS SATURDAY NIGHT!
I'M GONNA PRANCE AT THE CAKEWALK
'TIL MY HEELS TAKE FLIGHT!
GONNA POLISH MY DANCIN' SHOES -
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GONNA LOSE
THAT CAKEWALK
THIS SATURDAY NIGHT!

GOT A YEAR'S WORTH OF PRACTICE
FILLIN' UP MY TOES.
LAST YEAR, I SHOULDA WON,
BUT I FROZE.
UNTIL I WIN, I AIN'T GONNA REST -
SHOW ME DAT STEP WHERE YA PUMP YA CHEST?
I WANNA COME OUT SMELLIN' LIKE A
HIGH-STRUTTIN', GRAND CHAMPEEN,
TRIPLE-DECKER WINNING ROSE,
WHEN I WIN THAT

CAKEWALK
THIS SATURDAY NIGHT.
GONNA STRUT AT THE CAKEWALK
AN' I'LL BE A SIGHT!
SPIT-SHINE MY DANCIN' SHOES:
I'M TRADIN' IN MY TERPSICHORIAN BLUES
AT THE CAKEWALK.
GIMME THAT CAKEWALK.
GONNA CLAIM THE CAKEWALK!

THIS SATURDAY NIGHT!

(Dance Break. Mirandy dances. When the dance is over, Orlinda snatches the announcement out of Mirandy's hands.)

ORLINDA

You think you can win? You must've been chewin' on the sweetgum branch, too long.

MIRANDY

With breath like yours, you need to eat the whole tree.

ORLINDA

There is no need to be ill-mannered, Mirandy. Just some friendly advice. Leave your dancin' shoes for Church, 'cause you'll never win.

MIRANDY

I been practicing.

(Orlinda and Mirandy have a brief dance-off.)

ORLINDA

Well, you have gotten a wee bit better, but you can't win without a partner, and everybody knows that Monroe will be my partner, and everybody knows that he's the best dancer in Ridgetop.

MIRANDY

And everybody knows you look like a pot of old neck bones.

ORLINDA

Oh yeah.

MIRANDY

Yeah.

ORLINDA

Oh yeah.

MIRANDY

Yeah.

(Monroe dances in.)

MONROE

What you two fightin' for?

ORLINDA/MIRANDY

Will you be my dance partner at the junior cakewalk tomorrow night?

MONROE

Well, Mirandy, you are very nice and not crazy like Orlinda. But, Orlinda has won two years in a row, and I sure do like cake. Hmm...looks like I got me a predicament.

(Suddenly, Brother Wind swoops into Ridgetop and makes a mess of things, blowing over clotheslines, knocking off hats, stirring up the animals. Theater magic should be used.)

BROTHER WIND

SWOOSH!

WOOSH! WOOSH!

SWOOSH!

MIRANDY

Ma Dear, was that one of them hurricanes come early? It done knock me clean off your feet.

MA DEAR

No dear. That there was Brother Wind come high steppin' through Ridgetop. Dressed in his finest and trailing that long silvery wind cape behind him.

MIRANDY

You foolin' me! Ain't no such thing as Brother Wind.

(The ensemble dances Ma Dear's story.)

“THE LEGEND OF BROTHER WIND”

(Ma Dear)

MA DEAR

Ain't I never told you about the Legend of Brother Wind.

WHEN THE LAND WAS BORN
AND THE EARTH WAS FULL OF GRACE,
EVERYONE LIVED IN ONE PLACE.
NOW, THE SUN WAS BLAZING HOT,
'TIL THE CROPS WAS NEARLY TOAST.
EVEN US FOLKS WAS COOKIN' LIKE A ROAST.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

THAT'S WHY SOME OF US FOLKS
HAS SKIN THAT'S RICH AND DARK, BABY.

MR. JESSUP

THAT'S WHY SOME OF US FOLKS HAS VOICES LIKE THE LARK,

MA DEAR
THERE'S MAGIC INSIDE OF YOU, LIKE A SPARK.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY
THIS LAND HAD A KING,
A POWERFUL MAN,

ALL THREE
WHO COULDN'T TAKE ALL THE HEAT!

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY
SO, HE HAD HIS SORCERERS AND WIZARDS TRY TO COOL HIM OFF.
THEY WENT TO WORK AND CAST A SPELL-

ALL THREE
BROTHER WIND WAS BORN!

MA DEAR
SO FAST, HE MOVED THE TREES,

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY
SO FAST, HE MADE THE WATER STIR,

BOTH
SO FAST, HE COOLED THE EARTH
AND MADE THE CLOUDS CRY.

MR. JESSUP
WELL, EV'RYBODY CHEERED HIS FEAT

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY
AND EV'RYBODY DANCED FOR JOY.

ALL THREE
AND THE KING BECAME SELFISH!

Ev'rybody could drink the water, stand in the shade and grow food and cotton. Life was good. But the powerful King didn't want ev'rybody sharing his creation. So, he decided to trap the wind. He made many many men build a room so tall that it reached the moon. So, when the wind come swoopin' over the hill, that King trapped him in that big ol' room. Of course, now, everything got real hot again. And, whenever the king needed to cool off, he would high step into that room. The wind was all his and had to do what he was told. Now, the wind was not happy being trapped in this place,

ALL THREE
'CAUSE THE WIND LIKE TO RUN AND BE FREE.

MA DEAR

All the people in the land started to pass on from the heat. No crops could grow and no water could be consumed. So, the king had no choice but to let the wind go free, and the wind has been free ever since. *End.*

MIRANDY

That's a real nice story Momma, but it won't help me win the cakewalk.

MA DEAR

I didn't know we was still talkin' about the cakewalk. We was talkin' about Brother Wind and the way he be swirling through the trees, and dippin' on the river, and kickin' up his heels in the dust - just a turnin' and wheelin', like a dancer.

MIRANDY

Like a dancer? Sure wish Brother Wind could be my dance partner. Then, I'd be sure to win.

MA DEAR

Well, some folk still believe that whoever catch the Wind can make him do their biddin', just like that greedy King.

MIRANDY

That's it!

“I WANNA DANCE WITH THE WIND”
(Mirandy, Mis Poinsettia, Mr. Jessup, Birds, Ensemble)

I know Monroe gonna pick Orlinda, so I gotta catch the Wind.

I WANNA WIN.
I GOTTA WIN
I'M GONNA
BEAT THE STUFFIN' OUTTA
MEAN ORLINDA WITH A GRIN.

MA DEAR

Catchin' the wind is just a fairy tale!

MIRANDY

I GOTTA PLOT.
I GOTTA PLAN.
I GOTTA
CATCH THE WIND AN'
HOLD HIM CLOSE SO
I WON'T BE AN ALSO-RAN

I WANNA DANCE WITH THE WIND.
HOW CAN I DANCE WITH THE WIND?

(MIS POINSETTIA, a conjure woman enters.)

Maybe that Conjure woman got a spell she can teach me? Hey, Mis Poinsettia, folk say you not a for-real conjure woman like the ones in New Orleans, but I...

MIS POINSETTIA
Folk don't mess with me, just in case I is.

MIRANDY
What kinda spell you know could catch the wind?

MIS POINSETTIA
MY NEIGHBORS DON'T LIKE THE HOO DOO UP HERE.
BUT, I CAN SHOW YOU HOW TO CATCH THE WIND.
DON'T TELL I SHOW'D YOU THE HOO DOO UP HERE
WE JUST TALKIN' "FRIEND TO FRIEND".
"Whirling words for winding winds will wangle the wandering windy worldly whims."

MIRANDY
Uuuhhh...whirly windy...what? Never mind, my tongue get all messed up.

MIS POINSETTIA
You's a smart little thing, ain'tcha? Don't know if you actually need potions, conjure or spells though...ya see what I'm sayin'?

MIRANDY
No I don't. But, thank you very kindly anyhow.

(MIS POINSETTIA exits. MIRANDY continues to try to catch the wind, it is a comical dance.)

EZEL
Mirandy is you alright?

MIRANDY
Trying to catch the wind.

EZEL
Catch the wind? You is full of tomfoolery.

TOWNFOLK
LOOK AT HER
SHE'S GOING, GOING, GOING, GOING, GOING, GOING

AND IT LOOKS LIKE SHE AIN'T SLOWIN',
NOT A WHIT.

MIRANDY
I GOTTA THINK
AND DOUBLE QUICK.
ORLINDA
WON'T BE WAITING 'ROUND
TO SEE WHO I AM GONNA PICK.

I WANNA DANCE WITH THE WIND.
HOW CAN I DANCE WITH THE WIND?

Hey, Mr. Jessup, do you know how to catch the wind? I can't right figure it out.

MR. JESSUP	MIRANDY
THROWIN' BLACK PEPPER	
SEEM TO WORK FOR MY AUNT.	Your Aunt.
MY AUNT FROM IPSALA, MISSISSIPPI.	Ipsala?
JUST THROW A QUILT OVER OLD BROTHER WIND	
IT MAY SOUND DIPPY,	
BUT YOU'LL MAKE HIM ALL DRIPPY	
AND ON A FLIP, HE'LL BE AT YOUR BECK AND CALL.	
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT SHE'D CLAIM,	
WHEN SHE'D CATERWAUL.	

MIRANDY
That sound like too much work!

TOWNFOLK
LOOK AT HER
SHE'S STILL GOIN'
AND SHE THINKS
SHE'S CLOSE TO KNOWIN'.

MIRANDY
I GOTTA THINK BIGGER!
THAT'S WHAT I FIGGER!
There he goes, trippin' through that tree over there.

(She dances and meets some BIRDS [puppets].)

BIRDS (*Orlinda, G'Mama Beasley, Ma Dear*)
YOU CAN CATCH THE WIND WITH A WHISTLE.
PURSE YOUR LIPS AND CALL HIM TRUE.
YOU CAN CATCH THE WIND WITH A WHISTLE
FILL YOUR CHEEKS

AND TOOTLE-HEE-HOO.

BROTHER WIND LIKES TO BE PURSUED.
BROTHER WIND WANTS TO BE WOOED.
BROTHER WIND THINKS A KISS IS RUDE.
DON'T EVEN TRY IT, YOU CAN'T USE FOOD.

YOU CAN CATCH THE WITH A WHISTLE.
TAKE HEED WITH OUR FINAL CLUE:
YOU CAN CATCH THE WIND WITH A WHISTLE
JUST HOLD YOU BREATH TILL YOU TURN BLUE.
TOOTLE-HEE-HOO.

MIRANDY

Hold my breath? That's it!

(She takes a big breath and puffs out her cheeks. Orlanda, Monroe and Ezel enter.)

ORLINDA

Now, what she doing?

EZEL

Trying to catch the wind.

MONROE

What for?

EZEL

Who knows?

(Mirandy collapses on the floor. She is light headed.)

MIRANDY

Look at all the pretty stars.

MONROE

She been hangin' out with that conjure woman.

MIRANDY

DON'T WANNA WASTE GOOD PEPPER.
DON'T WANNA USE STRANGE WORDS.
SPEAKING OF STRANGE,
MAYBE IT'S ME,
BUT WAS I REALLY SERENADED BY BIRDS.

I'M GONNA DANCE WITH THE WIND.

I'M GONNA MAKE HIS WILL BEND.
AND WHEN I DO
I'M GONNA CATERWAUL.

PEPPER, SPELLS, SERENADES.
I'LL TRY'M ALL.

TOWNFOLK
WATCH HER
TRY AND
CATCH THE WIND!

MA DEAR

Mirandy, before the sky turn evening pink, can you stack the wood out back? I hope I don't have to *ask* you again.

MIRANDY

Is daddy gonna be back before the dance?

MA DEAR

Baby, you know your daddy stay at the saw mill, way far out West, workin' hard until the summer.

MIRANDY

But, with all that work, he miss out on all the fun and I miss out on him.

MA DEAR

Yes, but remember how it feel when you see him after a long time of missing out. Tell you what, you can think about your daddy when you help me at the hen house. You can pretend to be at the saw mill with him, while you stacking wood.

MIRANDY

Yes, ma'am. (*Ma Dear exits.*)

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY (*to the chickens- Puppets*)

Here chick chick chick! Here Chick chick chick.

MIRANDY

Grandmama Beasley, why mama always thinkin' about work. Yesterday, I picked a whole bale of cotton all by myself. Look...now I got old lady hands, just like yours.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Ummm...Ummm...Ummm...that's all I got's to say. Except...you got to take care of your business first and then you can have all the leisure time you want.

MIRANDY

Skinny Orlinda gonna win that cake, again. And everybody gonna say, “Orlinda this and Orlinda that...”

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Look like you in a situation.

MIRANDY

Do you know how to catch Brother Wind? I want to make him my partner at the cakewalk.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Can’t nobody put shackles on Brother Wind, chile. He be special. He be free.

MIRANDY

Forget his freedom.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Forget his freedom? Chile, sit for a spell and lemme put some learnin’ in you about freedom.

“COTTON”
(*Grandmama Beasley*)

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

You see them rows and rows of cotton out yonder, the ones you picked from. Well, them cotton is just like we used to be back in Africa. The sun opens up them pods and that cotton just poofs out, happy as the day is long. But then *people* come along and rip those delicate cotton balls out of they home, shove them in a bale and ship them off to the gin. Then it’s forced to be woven into something it wasn’t. The cotton don’t like that. When I was a little girl about your age, we were forced to do what other people tol’ us to do. We didn’t like that. I don’t think Brother Wind would like that either.

MIRANDY

Well, Ma Dear *forcin’* me do work.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

She not *forcin’* you do anything. Your mama is only *asking* for your help. Now, that’s all I got to say.

MIRANDY

Well, when I catch Brother Wind, I will *ask* him to help. Thanks Grandmama Beasley, I’m glad you not a piece of cotton no more.

(*She exits. Ma Dear enters.*)

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Ma Dear, you need to teach that chile some manners, she’s a ornery little thing.

MA DEAR

Mirandy has to learn it the hard way. And she ain't hurtin' nobody.

GRANDMAMA BEASLEY

Except your back, for doing all of her chores. Now, that's all I got to say. Except, if'n she do catch Brother Wind, *ask* him find me a husband.

(They exit. The TOWNFOLK enter and finish their evening work. MIRANDY stacks wood. It's a dance which grows slower as the day shifts to evening and the scene shifts to MIRANDY in her room.)