

From *Cane and Jelly*

*I gon tell you bout dis woman from down by me, bout how she had meddle in people business like she ain't had none a she own. She had like to keep people running through she mouth so much til people call she Telephone. Straight under she face. De children call she Miss Telephone.*

*She ain't feel no shame though. She say she only being who she is. And de worse part a de whole package? She like everybody conscience, which nobody ain't want.*

*So like Carnival time, she walk round wid she hand on she hip separating man from woman and woman from man. If she see two women yabba yabbing - at de beach, on de bus or wheresoever, she stroll right up to dem and bust dem bout whatsoever she tink dey talking bout.*

*"Allyou shouldn't be talking bout how tight she dress is just cause allyou could see de size, shape and hold of she batty. She look trampy, yes, but I gon tell she so. I not like you, whisper, whisper behind people back." And Telephone go up to de lady getting on de bus wid she five bag a ting, she dress hike up trying to make de steps and "why you dress so short/tight, Donna Francis, Miss Rachel's child? You too old for after school clothes, you ain't in you yard, you in de street. Cover youself decent like - we don't wan see all you business."*

*Time come de people does grouch she back, but not too hard cause dey ain't had nothin much to scold she bout, just she mouth. Plus she ole.*

*Later on in the story*

*"Yeah? Alfie? Alfie is you name? I remember you. You take up a lotta room on de dance floor." Lemonhead reach out he hand to clasp Alfie own.*

*"So what you doing over here, man?"*

*"I come live wid me daughter. You might know she. Frienda Bishop. She work in de big jewelry store to de head a main street."*

*"Oh, so Frienda is your daughter, eh? I gon remember that." And he drop he eye back to he work, fastening a new skin on a old drum.*

*"Say, who I could get a cold drink from round here?"*

*"Go by my sister. She over dere in de big hat. Name Telephone."*

*Alfie knew just who he meant. Had noticed her right away. A sweet blackberry skin woman wid a hat look like she in Easter parade. Lemonhead's sister, huh? What kind a name is Telephone? Is Telephone he say?*

*"She married?"*

*Lemonhead watch he so long 'til Alfie almost start to fidget. He cuss heself for letting a question like dat slip out so fast. He ain't even know dat he wanted to know. Just when he tink any more silence would make soup outta da bone Lemonhead finally speak.*

*"Been."*

*Been? Been? Been married for a long time? Or been married before but not now?*

*Alfie suck he teeth long and slow, seeing de ball and throwing it back. He turn off.*

*Lemonhead beat out a loud fast riff on he drum.*

*Later on in the story*

*Next ting you know Telephone ain't Telephone no more. Now she is Agatha. Not Agatha, mind you, but AHH-GAA-ta, wid a whole lotta breathy rolling around in de throat and a sharp sweet end to it like guavaberry wine. De people at church say, "you see AHH-GAA-ta come to church without no hat? Humph." De neighbors say "you see how AHH-GAA-ta friend dere to load up de car at fourday morning? Where he come from?" De follow band posse say, "you see how she rolling she bumy like she been doing it all de time? What? She been practicing in she bedroom? She almost as good as Marva!"*