

Lisez les documents A et B

Document A

[The scene takes places in Canada after World War II. Segregation was never institutionalized there. Langston is a black student.]

[Langston] was in his last year of medical school, and [Dorothy] had finished her studies and taken a job with the Toronto Labour Committee for Human Rights, and it fell upon her to head out on her lunch hour to find a place for them to live. They both wanted to rent part of a house.

5 After rejecting a few flats that had cockroaches¹ or that demanded princely rents, Dorothy found the perfect flat on the second floor of a house on Palmerston Boulevard. Langston could walk to the university in twenty minutes. [. . .] Dorothy offered to pay for the first month then and there, and to take the key and come back the next day with her husband and their possessions.

10 “I don’t usually like to rent until I have met both tenants,” Watson said.

“My husband, as you can appreciate, doesn’t have much time on his hands these days. He’s preparing for—”

15 “Yes, of course, of course. I’ll tell you what. I’ll hold the apartment for you. Come back tomorrow, and we’ll sign the contract and exchange the keys for the first month’s rent. You have my word. I’ll hold it for you.”

“All right, then. Tomorrow at seven in the evening?”

“Fine.”

They shook hands.

20 The next day, Dorothy parked her 1946 Plymouth² on Palmerston Boulevard. As she walked with Langston up the steps to the house, Dorothy noticed the red and white For Rent sign still on the door.

“How come it’s still there?” she said.

“Not a good sign.” Langston said. He rang the bell. Watson opened the door and stepped out onto the porch. [. . .]

25 “Well, we’re here.” Dorothy said. “We’d like to sign the contract, pay you, and bring our things in from the car.”

30 Langston watched the man open his mouth, close it, stop, pause. People looked at Dorothy and him in the streets—in fact people looked at them every day—but this was the first time that they had decided to rent a place together. Langston instantly knew that they would not get the flat. [. . .]

“I’m so sorry,” Watson said, looking only at Dorothy, “and I hope you haven’t been overly inconvenienced, but I have made other arrangements.”

Lawrence Hill, *Any Known Wood*, 1997

¹ cockroaches: *cafards*

² Plymouth = middle-class car

Document B

My generation's parents came to Canada in the late '60s and early '70s to avail themselves of expanded educational and professional opportunities—not because they were searching for a sense of belonging or wanted to reinvent themselves, as is often associated with immigrant folklore. They were descendants of fifth- and sixth-generation Guyanese, Jamaicans, Kittitians, etc. Whether they began in Canada as university students or domestics, their identity as people from the Caribbean remained completely intact. The influence was so strong that my generation exclusively referenced our parents' birthplace as our own.

[. . .] After all, what, really, was being Canadian? Yes, you were born here and lived here all your life, but everything—absolutely everything, from your table etiquette to your family pride—was figuratively imported. There was no anchor¹ here, nothing to claim, at least not the way our parents claimed “back home,” [. . .] We Canadian-born blacks were not established; therefore, we had no reason to feel pride – or so it appeared.

I remember that shortly after I arrived [. . .] in Los Angeles, I met a black American bus driver. He told me that he really liked Canadians because he had met two who treated him as though he were white. Wh-aaa-t? Was he serious? White?

Wait. That's desirable? Why? Black Americans have their own schools and self-sufficient communities... and... “Hmm,” I thought. Maybe the sanitized TV images of a multiracial American haven² that we watched growing up were not entirely reflective of Americana, white or black. Perhaps my generation's parents knew what they were doing when they insisted on raising us as West Indians first, rather than Canadians.

Alyson Renaldo, ‘Black Canadian Like Me’, *The Root*, April 25, 2011

¹ anchor (here) = a link with the place

² haven = a place offering favourable opportunities or conditions.