

So, on the day following, he took my mother to an auction-room on Main Street and sold her to the highest bidder, for five hundred and fifty dollars. Oh! God! the pity of it! "In the home of the brave and the land of the free," in the sight of the stars and stripes—that symbol of freedom—sold away from her child, to satisfy the anger of a peevish mistress!

My mother returned to the house to get her few belongings, and straining me to her breast, begged me to be a good girl, that she was going to run away, and would buy me as soon as she could. With all the inborn faith of a child, I believed it most fondly, and when I heard that she had actually made her escape, three weeks after, my heart gave an exultant throb and cried, "God is good!"

A large reward was offered, the bloodhounds (curse them and curse their masters) were set loose on her trail. In the day time she hid in caves and the surrounding woods, in the night time, guided by the wondrous North Star, that blessed lodestone of a slave people, my mother finally reached Chicago, where she was arrested by the negro-catchers. At this time the Fugitive Slave Law was in full operation, and it was against the law of the whole country to aid and protect an escaped slave; not even a drink of water, for the love of the Master, might be given, and those who dared to do it (and there were many such brave hearts, thank God!) placed their lives in danger.

The presence of bloodhounds and "nigger-catchers" in their midst, created great excitement and scandalized the community. Feeling ran high and hundreds of people gathered together and declared that mother should not be returned to slavery; but fearing that Mr. Cox would wreak his vengeance upon me, my mother finally gave herself up to her captors, and returned to St. Louis. And so the mothers of Israel have been ever slain through their deepest affections!

After my mother's return, she decided to sue for her freedom, and for that purpose employed a good lawyer. She had ample testimony to prove that she was kidnapped, and it was so fully verified that the jury decided that she was a free woman, and papers were made out accordingly.

In the meanwhile, Miss Martha Berry had married Mr. Mitchell and taken me to live with her. I had never been taught to work, as playing with the babies had been my sole occupation; therefore, when Mrs. Mitchell commanded me to do the weekly washing and ironing, I had no more idea how it was to be done than Mrs. Mitchell herself. But I made the effort to do what she required, and my failure would have been amusing had it not been so appalling. In those days filtering was unknown and the many ways of clearing water were to me an unsolved riddle. I never had to do it, so it never concerned me how the clothes were ever washed clean.

As the Mississippi water was even muddier than now, the results of my washing can be better imagined than described. After soaking and boiling the clothes in its earthy depths, for a couple of days, in vain attempt to get them clean, and rinsing through several waters, I found the clothes were getting darker and darker, until they nearly approximated my own color. In my despair, I frantically rushed to my mother and sobbed out my troubles on her kindly

breast. So in the morning, before the white people had arisen, a friend of my mother came to the house and washed out the clothes. During all this time, Mrs. Mitchell was scolding vigorously, saying over and over again, "Lucy, you do not want to work, you are a lazy, good-for-nothing nigger!" I was angry at being called a nigger, and replied, "You don't know nothing, yourself, about it, and you expect a poor ignorant girl to know more than you do yourself; if you had any feeling you would get somebody to teach me, and then I'd do well enough."

She then gave me a wrapper to do up, and told me if I ruined that as I did the other clothes, she would whip me severely. I answered, "You have no business to whip me. I don't belong to you."

My mother had so often told me that she was a free woman and that I should not die a slave, I always had a feeling of independence, which would invariably crop out in these encounters with my mistress; and when I thus spoke, saucily, I must confess she opened her eyes in angry amazement and cried:

"You do belong to me, for my papa left you to me in his will, when you were a baby, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself to talk so to one that you have been raised with; now, you take that wrapper, and if you don't do it up properly, I will bring you up with a round turn."

Without further comment, I took the wrapper, which was too handsome to trust to an inexperienced hand, like Mrs. Mitchell very well knew I was, and washed it, with the same direful results as chronicled before. But I could not help it, as heaven is my witness. I was entirely and hopelessly ignorant! But of course my mistress would not believe it, and declared over and over again, that I did it on purpose to provoke her and show my defiance of her wishes. In vain did I disclaim any such intentions. She was bound to carry out her threat of whipping me.

I rebelled against such government, and would not permit her to strike me; she used shovel, tongs and broomstick in vain, as I disarmed her as fast as she picked up each weapon. Infuriated at her failure, my opposition and determination not to be whipped, Mrs. Mitchell declared she would report me to Mr. Mitchell and have him punish me.

When her husband returned home, she immediately entered a list of complaints against me as long as the moral law, including my failure to wash her clothes properly, and her inability to break my head for it; the last indictment seemed to be the heaviest she could bring against me. I was in the shadow of the doorway as the woman raved, while Mr. Mitchell listened patiently until the end of his wife's grievances reached an appeal to him to whip me with the strength that a man alone could possess.

Then he declared, "Martha, this thing of cutting up and slashing servants is something I know nothing about, and positively will not do. I don't believe in slavery, anyhow; it is a curse on this land, and I wish we were well rid of it."

"Mr. Mitchell, I will not have that saucy baggage around this house, for if she finds you won't whip her, there will be no living with her, so you shall just sell her, and I insist upon it."

"Well, Martha," he answered, "I found the girl with you when we were married, and as you claim her as yours, I shall not interpose any objections to the disposal of what you choose to call your property, in any manner you see fit, and I will make arrangements for selling her at once."

I distinctly overheard all that was said, and was just determined not to be sold as I was not to be whipped. My mother's lawyer had told her to caution me never to go out of the city, if, at any time, the white people wanted me to go, so I was quite settled as to my course, in case Mr. Mitchell undertook to sell me.

Several days after this conversation took place, Mrs. Mitchell, with her baby and nurse, Lucy Wash, made a visit to her grandmother's, leaving orders that I should be sold before her return; so I was not surprised to be ordered by Mr. Mitchell to pack up my clothes and get ready to go down the river, for I was to be sold that morning, and leave, on the steamboat Alex Scott, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

"Can't I go see my mother, first?" I asked.

"No," he replied, not very gently, "there is no time for that, you can see her when you come back. So hurry up and get ready, and let us have no more words about it!"

How I did hate him! To hear him talk as if I were going to take a pleasure trip, when he knew that if he sold me South, as he intended, I would never see my dear mother again.

However, I hastily ran up stairs and packed my trunk, but my mother's injunction, "never to go out of the city," was ever present in my mind.

Mr. Mitchell was Superintendent of Indian Affairs, his office being in the dwelling house, and I could hear him giving orders to his clerk, as I ran lightly down the stairs, out of the front door to the street, and with fleet foot, I skimmed the road which led to my mother's door, and, reaching it, stood trembling in every limb with terror and fatigue.

I could not gain admittance, as my mother was away to work and the door was locked. A white woman, living next door, and who was always friendly to mother, told me that she would not return until night. I clasped my hands in despair and cried, "Oh! the white people have sold me, and I had to run away to keep from being sold down the river."

This white lady, whose name I am sorry I cannot remember, sympathized with me, as she knew my mother's story and had written many letters for her, so she offered me the key of her house which, fortunately, fitted my mother's door, and I was soon inside, cowering with fear in the darkness, magnifying every noise and every passing wind, until my imagination had almost converted the little cottage into a boat, and I was steaming down South, away from my mother, as fast as I could go.

Late at night mother returned, and was told all that had happened, and after getting supper, she took me to a friend's house for concealment, until the next day.

As soon as Mr. Mitchell had discovered my unlooked-for departure, he was

furious, for he did not think I had sense enough to run away; he accused the coachman of helping me off, and, despite the poor man's denials, hurried him away to the calaboose and put him under the lash, in order to force a confession. Finding this course unavailing, he offered a reward to the negro catchers, on the same evening, but their efforts were equally fruitless.

On the morning of the 8th of September, 1842, my mother sued Mr. D. D. Mitchell for the possession of her child, Lucy Ann Berry. My mother, accompanied by the sheriff, took me from my hiding place and conveyed me to the jail, which was located on Sixth Street, between Chestnut and Market, where the Laclede Hotel now stands, and there met Mr. Mitchell, with Mr. H. S. Cox, his brother-in-law.

Judge Bryant Mullanphy read the law to Mr. Mitchell, which stated that if Mr. Mitchell took me back to his house, he must give bond and security to the amount of two thousand dollars, and furthermore, I should not be taken out of the State of Missouri until I had a chance to prove my freedom. Mr. H. S. Cox became his security and Mr. Mitchell gave bond accordingly, and then demanded that I should be put in jail.

"Why do you want to put that poor young girl in jail?" demanded my lawyer. "Because," he retorted, "her mother or some of her crew might run her off, just to make me pay the two thousand dollars; and I would like to see her lawyer, or any other man, in jail, that would take up a d___ nigger case like that."

"You need not think, Mr. Mitchell," calmly replied Mr. Murdock, "because my client is colored that she has no rights, and can be cheated out of her freedom. She is just as free as you are, and the Court will so decide it, as you will see."

However, I was put in a cell, under lock and key, and there remained for seventeen long and dreary months, listening to the

—foreign echoes from the street,
Faint sounds of revel, traffic, conflict keen—
And, thinking that man's reiterated feet
Have gone such ways since e'er the world has been,
I wondered how each oft-used tone and glance
Retains its might and old significance."

My only crime was seeking for that freedom which was my birthright! I heard Mr. Mitchell tell his wife that he did not believe in slavery, yet, through his instrumentality, I was shut away from the sunlight, because he was determined to prove me a slave, and thus keep me in bondage. Consistency, thou art a jewel.

At the time my mother entered suit for her freedom, she was not instructed to mention her two children, Nancy and Lucy, so the white people took advantage of this flaw, and showed a determination to use every means in their power to prove that I was not her child.

This gave my mother an immense amount of trouble, but she had girded up her loins for the fight, and, knowing that she was right, was resolved, by the help of God and a good lawyer, to win my case against all opposition.

After advice by competent persons, mother went to Judge Edward Bates and begged him to plead the case, and, after fully considering the proof and learning that my mother was a poor woman, he consented to undertake the case and make his charges only sufficient to cover his expenses. It would be well here to give a brief sketch of Judge Bates, as many people wondered that such a distinguished statesman would take up the case of an obscure negro girl.

Edward Bates was born in Belmont, Goochland county, Va., September, 1793. He was of Quaker descent, and inherited all the virtues of that peace-loving people. In 1812, he received a midshipman's warrant, and was only prevented from following the sea by the influence of his mother, to whom he was greatly attached. Edward emigrated to Missouri in 1814, and entered upon the practice of law, and, in 1816, was appointed prosecuting lawyer for the St. Louis Circuit. Toward the close of the same year, he was appointed Attorney General for the new State of Missouri, and in 1826, while yet a young man, was elected representative to congress as an anti-Democrat, and served one term. For the following twenty-five years, he devoted himself to his profession, in which he was a shining light. His probity and uprightness attracted to him a class of people who were in the right and only sought justice, while he repelled, by his virtues, those who traffic in the miseries or mistakes of unfortunate people, for they dared not come to him and seek counsel to aid them in their villainy.

In 1847, Mr. Bates was delegate to the Convention for Internal Improvement, held in Chicago, and by his action he came prominently before the whole country. In 1850, President Fillmore offered him the portfolio of Secretary of War, which he declined. Three years later, he accepted the office of Judge of St. Louis Land Court.

When the question of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was agitated, he earnestly opposed it, and thus became identified with the "free labor" party in Missouri, and united with it, in opposition to the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution. He afterwards became a prominent anti-slavery man, and in 1859 was mentioned as a candidate for the presidency. He was warmly supported by his own State, and for a time it seemed that the opposition to Governor Seward might concentrate on him. In the National Republican Convention, 1860, he received forty-eight votes on the first ballot, but when it became apparent that Abraham Lincoln was the favorite, Mr. Bates withdrew his name. Mr. Lincoln appointed Judge Bates Attorney General, and while in the Cabinet he acted a dignified, safe and faithful part. In 1864, he resigned his office and returned to his home in St. Louis, where he died in 1869, surrounded by his weeping family.

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Princes and lords are but the breath of kings.

'An honest man's the noblest work of God.'"

On the 7th of February, 1844, the suit for my freedom began. A bright, sunny day, a day which the happy and care-free would drink in with a keen sense of enjoyment. But my heart was full of bitterness; I could see only gloom which seemed to deepen and gather closer to me as I neared the courtroom. The jailer's sister-in-law, Mrs. Lacy, spoke to me of submission and patience; but I could not feel anything but rebellion against my lot. I could not see one gleam of brightness in my future, as I was hurried on to hear my fate decided.

Among the most important witnesses were Judge Robert Wash and Mr. Harry Douglas, who had been an overseer on Judge Wash's farm, and also Mr. MacKeon, who bought my mother from H. S. Cox, just previous to her running away.

Judge Wash testified that "the defendant, Lucy A. Berry, was a mere infant when he came in possession of Mrs. Fannie Berry's estate, and that he often saw the child in the care of its reputed mother, Polly, and to his best knowledge and belief, he thought Lucy A. Berry was Polly's own child."

Mr. Douglas and Mr. MacKeon corroborated Judge Wash's statement. After the evidence from both sides was all in, Mr. Mitchell's lawyer, Thomas Hutchinson, commenced to plead. For one hour, he talked so bitterly against me and against my being in possession of my liberty that I was trembling, as if with ague, for I certainly thought everybody must believe him; indeed I almost believed the dreadful things he said, myself, and as I listened I closed my eyes with sickening dread, for I could just see myself floating down the river, and my heart-throbs seemed to be the throbs of the mighty engine which propelled me from my mother and freedom forever!

Oh! what a relief it was to me when he finally finished his harangue and resumed his seat! As I never heard anyone plead before, I was very much alarmed, although I knew in my heart that every word he uttered was a lie! Yet, how was I to make people believe? It seemed a puzzling question!

Judge Bates arose, and his soulful eloquence and earnest pleading made such an impression on my sore heart, I listened with renewed hope. I felt the black storm clouds of doubt and despair were fading away, and that I was drifting into the safe harbor of the realms of truth. I felt as if everybody *must* believe *him*, for he clung to the truth, and I wondered how Mr. Hutchinson could so lie about a poor defenseless girl like me.

Judge Bates chained his hearers with the graphic history of my mother's life, from the time she played on Illinois banks, through her trials in slavery, her separation from her husband, her efforts to become free, her voluntary return to slavery for the sake of her child, Lucy, and her subsequent efforts in securing her own freedom. All these incidents he lingered over step by step, and concluding, he said:

Gentlemen of the jury, I am a slave-holder myself, but, thanks to the Almighty God, I am above the base principle of holding anybody a slave that has as good right to her freedom as this girl has been proven to have; she was free before she was born; her mother was free, but kidnapped in her youth, and sacrificed to the greed of negro traders, and no free woman can give birth to a slave child, as it is in direct violation of the laws of God and man!

At this juncture he read the affidavit of Mr. A. Posey, with whom my mother lived at the time of her abduction; also affidavits of Mr. and Mrs. Woods, in corroboration of the previous facts duly set forth. Judge Bates then said:

Gentleman of the jury, here I rest this case as I would not want any better evidence for one of my own children. The testimony of Judge Wash is alone sufficient to substantiate the claim of Polly Crockett Berry to the defendant as being her own child.

The case was then submitted to the jury, about 8 o'clock in the evening, and I was returned to the jail and locked in the cell which I had occupied for seventeen months, filled with the most intense anguish.

There's a joy in every sorrow,
There's a relief from every pain;
Though to-day 'tis dark to-morrow
He will turn all bright again.

Before the sheriff bade me good night he told me to be in readiness at nine o'clock on the following morning to accompany him back to court to hear the verdict. My mother was not at the trial. She had lingered many days about the jail expecting my case would be called, and finally when called to trial the dear, faithful heart was not present to sustain me during that dreadful speech of Mr. Hutchinson. All night long I suffered agonies of fright, the suspense was something awful, and could only be comprehended by those who have gone through some similar ordeal.

I had missed the consolation of my mother's presence, and I felt so hopeless and alone! Blessed mother! how she clung and fought for me. No work was too hard for her to undertake. Others would have flinched before the obstacles which confronted her, but undauntedly she pursued her way, until my freedom was established by every right and without a questioning doubt!

On the morning of my return to Court, I was utterly unable to help myself. I was so overcome with fright and emotion,—with the alternating feelings of despair and hope—that I could not stand still long enough to dress myself. I trembled like an aspen leaf; so I sent a message to Mrs. Lacy to request permission for me to go to her room, that she might assist me in dressing. I

had done a great deal of sewing for Mrs. Lacy, for she had showed me much kindness, and was a good Christian. She gladly assisted me, and under her willing hands I was soon made ready, and, promptly at nine o'clock, the sheriff called and escorted me to the courthouse.

On our way thither, Judge Bates overtook us. He lived out a short distance in the country, and was riding on horseback. He tipped his hat to me as politely as if I were the finest lady in the land, and cried out, "Good morning Miss Lucy, I suppose you had pleasant dreams last night!" He seemed so bright and smiling that I was imbued with renewed hope; and when he addressed the sheriff with "Good morning Sir. I don't suppose the jury was out twenty minutes were they?" and the sheriff replied "oh! no, sir," my heart gave a leap, for I was sure that my fate was decided for weal or woe.

I watched the judge until he turned the corner and desiring to be relieved of suspense from my pent-up anxiety, I eagerly asked the sheriff if I were free, but he gruffly answered that "he didn't know." I was sure he did know, but was too mean to tell me. How could he have been so flinty, when he must have seen how worried I was.

At last the courthouse was reached and I had taken my seat in such a condition of helpless terror that I could not tell one person from another. Friends and foes were as one, and vainly did I try to distinguish them. My long confinement, burdened with harrowing anxiety, the sleepless night I had just spent, the unaccountable absence of my mother, had brought me to an indescribable condition. I felt dazed, as if I were no longer myself. I seemed to be another person—an onlooker—and in my heart dwelt a pity for the poor, lonely girl, with down-cast face, sitting on the bench apart from anyone else in that noisy room. I found myself wondering where Lucy's mother was, and how she would feel if the trial went against her; I seemed to have lost all feeling about it, but was speculating what Lucy would do, and what her mother would do, if the hand of Fate was raised against poor Lucy! Oh! how sorry I did feel for myself!

At the sound of a gentle voice, I gathered courage to look upward, and caught the kindly gleam of Judge Bates' eyes, as he bent, his gaze upon me and smilingly said, "I will have you discharged in a few minutes, Miss Lucy!"

Some other business occupied the attention of the Court, and when I had begun to think they had forgotten all about me, Judge Bates arose and said calmly, "Your Honor, I desire to have this girl, Lucy A. Berry, discharged before going into any other business."

Judge Mullanphy answered "Certainly!" Then the verdict was called for and rendered, and the jurymen resumed their places. Mr. Mitchell's lawyer jumped up and exclaimed:

"Your Honor, my client demands that this girl be remanded to jail. He does not consider that the case has had a fair trial, I am not informed as to what course he intends to pursue, but I am now expressing his present wishes!"

Judge Bates was on his feet in a second and cried: "For shame! is it not

Tina Turner

1939-

Born Anna Mae Bullock in Nutbush, Tennessee, Tina Turner moved to St. Louis at age sixteen and attended Sumner High School.

Tina and her friends spent much of their free time in music clubs in East St. Louis. In 1956, at the Club Manhattan, Tina became mesmerized by Ike Turner, the lead singer of the Kings of Rhythm. Between sets one evening, she summoned her courage and did an impromptu performance for Ike, who was spellbound by Tina's voice and presence. At age seventeen, Tina became the featured singer in Ike's band, beginning a tumultuous twenty-year personal and professional relationship.

In 1960, the Ike and Tina Turner Revue released "A Fool in Love," their first hit. In 1962, she and Ike married. For seventeen years, the couple rode a roller coaster of success and excess. Always, it was the charismatic Tina in center stage, whipping crowds into a frenzy with her powerful voice and raw sex appeal. A high point came in 1969, when they opened for The Rolling Stones tour. Among Ike and Tina Turner's greatest hits during this period were "Proud Mary" and "Nutbush City Limits." In 1976, Tina divorced Ike citing spousal abuse and, after some floundering, established a successful solo career. In 1974, Tina Turner embarked on an acting career, appearing in the film version of The Who's rock opera Tommy. In 1985 she appeared in the film Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome.

Tina received three Grammy awards in 1984, including Record of the Year for "What's Love Got To Do With It." In 1991, she was inducted into the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame.

This excerpt from Tina's autobiography, I, Tina: My Life Story (1987, with Kurt Loder), recounts the time she first met Ike Turner and sang for him. I, Tina was made into a feature film in 1993 starring Angela Bassett as Tina and Laurence Fishburne as Ike.

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St. Louis in the mid-fifties was a fairly sedate place—especially in comparison to East St. Louis, its sister city across the Mississippi River. East St. Louis had *action*, and it never seemed to stop. There were cathouses and gambling dens and an infinity of clubs that ranged from lavish nightclubs to nondescript roadhouses at the end of anonymous dirt roads. The whole area was awhirl with night life, from places like the Blue Note and the Bird Cage, the Sportsman and the Lakeside, and all kinds of jazz clubs to Perry's Lounge in Eagle Park, Kingsbury's and Garrett's Lounge in Madison—the list seemed endless.

"Some of those places didn't even have keys to the front door," says Gene Washington, a local drummer at the time. "They just stayed open twenty-four hours a day, three hundred sixty-five days a year." Adds Clayton Love, the Clarksdale singer who got his first sight of the St. Louis area around this same time: "It was better than Vegas. There was every kind of entertainment you could want. And on the East Side, it was just ridiculously happy."

Anna Mae Bullock, sixteen years old and fresh from the backwoods of Tennessee, knew nothing of such high life upon arriving in St. Louis to live with her mother. She would soon learn, however—entrée was provided by her sister Alline, already employed as a barmaid at a local club. Like an extraordinarily large number of other local young women, Alline would rave about what she considered the hottest band in town: the Kings of Rhythm, led by a wiry little guitarist named Ike Turner.

Tina: Sumner High was all black, but very high class—these were the children of doctors, professional people. And here I was, fresh from the country. My mother was basically a maid, and the man she was living with, Alex Jupiter, he was a truck driver, driving the big diesel trucks to Kansas City and Chicago. So in this new school, I was still feeling sort of lower class.

I started going to the clubs because Alline was already doing that sort of thing. She worked for Leroy Tyus, an upper-class black man. He had some dealings with the government, I think, and he drove a Cadillac and had a white wife, and he had this bar, the Tail of the Cock. It was a very high-class place; the biggest people in town went there, and they tipped big, too. Alline made good money there. And when she went out on dates, there was always a Cadillac or a big Lincoln picking her up.

I idolized Alline, and I tried to copy her. She was about my size now—34-26-38—but with big breasts and great hair—really very pretty. She had this wonderful coat—wool with velvet stripes—that she would never actually wear: She'd put it around her shoulders and turn up the collar, then pull out one of these great cigarette holders she used. And she always wore high-heeled pumps—leather in the winter, patent in the summer—and black hose, with the seam, and garter belts. And she would tear the lining out of her slips so that if she undressed there was just this lace shift that you could see through—ha-ha! I guess she was doing things, right? But she was really a beautiful girl, and I tried to be like her, to act like her. But I was all wrong. She wore her hair very loose, and mine was tight and curly. She had a smaller nose, smaller lips, smaller face—with me, everything was too pronounced. I really wasn't quite up to it.

Well, on weeknights after work Alline had the dates. But on weekends, she and her girlfriends would get together and they would go to see Ike Turner, first at the Club D'Lisa, and then, after hours, from about two A.M. on, at the Club Manhattan, across the river in East St. Louis. None of the doctors and things that Alline was dating would go to places like that—they'd go to the

high-class restaurants and cocktail bars, you know? So Alline would go with the girlfriends. Because Ike Turner and the Kings of Rhythm were what was happening—in St. Louis, they were as big as the Beatles would be later on. But they had a pretty rough reputation, too, and the idea of a teenager like me going to one of those clubs to see them was definitely a *don't*.

One Saturday night, though, I got permission from Ma to go out with Alline. And I got dressed up in some of her clothes, with lipstick and all of that, and Alline said, "We're goin' to East St. Louis to see Ike Turner and his band." I tried to act older—like just another one of the girlfriends, you know?—but I was nervous, didn't know if I was going to be able to get in. And I didn't like East St. Louis—it seemed like the South to me. But off we went.

Well, we arrived at the Club Manhattan and boy, was it a jumping joint. It was like one of the Holes back in Ripley or Brownsville, but all in one club—about a two-hundred-fifty-seater, with the stage in the center of the room and tables all around it, and a great big painting of the Kings of Rhythm up on one wall. The band was already playing when we arrived—they always warmed up the house before Ike came on—and the place was filled with women. Tons of girls, black and white—and that wasn't really allowed then, you know, the white ones being there. But they came anyway. As I later found out, Ike's band mostly drew women, hardly any men—when men came, they were usually looking for their women, you know? So there were some white girls, young and old, and lots of fine black women: The ones with the big butts and big legs—well proportioned, but big. And all these women were sitting there in their bare-backed shoes, seamed stockings, and backless dresses—I mean, looking good—and smoking and drinking and making eyes at the band, right? Trying to figure out who would be going home with who when the night was over.

I was sitting there, a little bit bored, because this wasn't really my cup of tea, you know? Or at least I didn't think it was. Then Ike walked in the room, and you could feel it, somehow. He had the body then that David Bowie has now—great! His suit looked like it was hanging on a hanger. He walked through the room, and everybody was going, "Hey, Ike, hey, man," and I thought: "What an immaculate-looking black man." He wasn't my type, though—not at all. His teeth seemed wrong, and his hairstyle, too—a process thing with waves that lay right down on his forehead. It looked like a wig that had been glued on. When he got closer, I thought, "God, he's ugly." But there was something about him. Then he got up onstage and picked up his guitar. He hit one note, and I thought: "Jesus, listen to this guy play." And that joint started rocking. The floor was packed with people dancing and sweating to this great music, and I was just sitting there, amazed, staring at Ike Turner. I thought, "God, I wonder why so many women like him? He sure is ugly." But I kept listening and looking. I almost went into a trance just watching him.

Ann, now seventeen, continued showing up for the Kings' sets occasionally, at the D'Lisa and the Club Manhattan. She struck up a

friendship with Jessie Knight, the bassist, who was close to her own age ("I think he kind of had eyes for me"), and got to know the rest of the band, each member of which had a nickname. Raymond Hill, the tenor saxophonist, whose maternal grandfather was Chinese, was called "Chink." Gene Washington, the drummer, was "Stompy." Ike was "Weasel." Their wild music and clamorous popularity spelled glamour to Ann, and soon she became hooked. Might the mysterious Ike, she wondered, ever allow her the chance to get up onstage and show what she knew—just knew—she could do?

Tina: I wanted to get up there so bad. There was tons of talent on that stage. But there were also lots of people in the crowd always trying to get up and sing with the band. And I was real thin then, and the fashion among black women, as I say, was to be real big in the hips and legs. So I was just this frail little thing, and nobody paid much attention to me. But I was determined. What really sparked it for me was this girl named Pat. She went to the same school I did, and she would always come to see the Kings, too. Well, one night at the Club D'Lisa, Ike was after her. She was his type—had an ass like a pillow, that girl did. Totally out of fashion at school, but you should have seen her at the Club D'Lisa! I was the one that was out of place there. Anyway, Ike was flirting with her, like all those guys in the band did with the women—they'd pull them right off the dance floor, go "Hey, girl," and feel their fannies, you know? And this Pat told him that she could sing. Well, she was younger than me, but Ike let her get up there—and she could not sing. So I told Alline to tell Gene, her boyfriend, to ask Ike if I could try a song. Ike said something like, "Yeah, sure, I'll call her up," but he never did. I would sit there every night trying to get his attention, but he avoided me. Probably thought, "Oh, God, there's that girl again." I was so disappointed. But I just was not his type of woman. I never was.

Finally, one night, I made my move. It was intermission and things were quiet. Most of the band had gone outside for some air, and Ike was up onstage by himself, just playing the organ. He stayed up there sometimes between sets to avoid troubles with all his women. I mean, this band had tons and tons of women: Each of the guys must have had ten girlfriends apiece, and Ike had twenty. And sometimes maybe six of them would show up at the Club Manhattan all at once. So he would stay onstage to avoid getting into fights. Well, he was up there at the organ, and suddenly I realized that I knew the song he was playing. It was "You Know I Love You," the B. B. King tune. Right about then, Gene came in from outside. He had been tipping around a little that night, and Alline wasn't too happy with him. He came over to our table and started teasing her, because he knew she was mad. He got a mike down from the stage and started trying to get her to sing into it. Well, Alline would die before she would ever sing in public. And she's going, "Get that damn mike out of my face," you know? Still mad at him. So I took the mike, and I started singing: