

Mildred / Richard

COHEN: *(shuffling an untidy mess of papers, reading one, a bit befuddled, overworked, antsy. He has a New York accent)*. OK. Great. Good. So... *(Peering at papers.)* Mr. and Mrs. Jeter—

MILDRED: Loving---

COHEN *(checking papers)*. Oh. Yes. Sorry. Oh. Wait. You are Mildred Jeter who wrote the letter, I understand---

MILDRED: Mildred Jeter Loving.

COHEN: Yes. Sorry about the mix-up. I'm Bernie Cohen from the American Civil Liberties Union and we think you have a case that could very well end up in the United States Supreme Court—

MILDRED: I don't care about none of that I just want to live with my husband.

COHEN: I understand that, Mrs. Jeter—

MILDRED & RICHARD: Loving.

COHEN: Yeah. Sorry. I kind of got this last minute and I haven't had the chance to go over the particulars very much. It seems to me, though, under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, equal protection under the law could be interpreted to mean equality as United States citizens and guaranteed to all the rights and privileges enjoyed as US citizens—

MILDRED: I ain't never voted in an election. Am I still a US citizen?

COHEN: Mrs. Jeter, of course you are.

RICHARD: *(angry, standing up)*. Excuse me, but it's Loving and you better get it right or we are going out of here. Maybe we better go anyhow. Come on, Millie.

COHEN: No. I'm—I'm sorry. Please. Please stay. I'm sorry.

MILDRED: Richie—

RICHARD: I don't like these lawyers. I don't like how they took us away from each other and argued all their mumbo jumbo over us. I am just sick of laws and law courts and judges and now this creep can't even get our name—

MILDRED: *(rises from her chair)*. Excuse us a sec, Mr. Cohen.

COHEN: Look, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I guess I'm nervous. Excited. See—this could be very big. Not since Perez vs. Sharp way back in forty-eight—

MILDRED: Excuse me please.

COHEN: Sure. Yes. Of course.

*(COHEN stands, walks some distance away. MILDRED holds out her hands. RICHARD takes them. They look at each other.)*

MILDRED: You done steamin' about nothin'?

RICHARD: Their fancy suits and their hotshot talk-

MILDRED: I say – You done steaming, boy?

*(Pause. They look at each other. He cools down.)*

RICHARD: Yeah.

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*(She kisses him on the cheek, leads him back to their seats.)*

MILDRED: *(to COHEN)*. OK.

*(COHEN comes back, trying to seem uneager but nearly bursting inside. Motions them to sit again.)*

COHEN: See, what we have against us are consistent court rulings reaffirming state's rights under the Tenth Amendment. There is nothing in the Constitution about marriage and it has been customary precedent to say that quotidian matters devolve to the state and local governments—

RICHARD: I think you should talk English.

MILDRED: Richie—

COHEN: Oh. Sorry. States usually control matters in every life like marriage—

RICHARD: Marriage ain't an everyday. It's once in a life.

COHEN: Yes. But local governments are where your police and fire departments and garbage collection happens and that's where you get married.

RICHARD: I don't like that you lump marriage next to garbage like that neither.

MILDRED: Richie, you need to stop. OK? You need to stop right now. This man is going to help us and you are just acting like a pig. Now you get your Christian on you and be nice, you hear me?

RICHARD: *(still angry)*. Yeah.

MILDRED: Look at me. Look at me.

*(He looks at her.)*

MILDRED: *(con't)*. Donnie in the hospital from that car. People coming in our house at night and arresting us. The house you built waiting for us back home and we can't even get inside of it together without they hold years in jail over our heads. You think on that, boy. You think on that hard with the head God gave you and stop thinking with your sore butt!