"If they can't talk it out," said Simple, "why do they think I should fight it out?"

"Because you are expendable," I said. "Leaders never go to war."

"Most of them are too old," said Simple. "Besides, I hear Generals never fight. They just stand way back on a hill somewhere and say, 'Charge on, men!' When it comes to Presidents and Cabinet Members, they don't even leave Washington."

"The theory is that leaders have to live to lead," I said, "otherwise who would be in charge? Who would make policies?"

"I cannot collect on police officers when I am dead," said Simple. "And, being colored, chances are one in a million that I will ever be a leader. No air-cooled air raid shelter for me. I will have to be out there fighting for Berlin. I had rather fight for Birmingham."

"Shaaa-as-a!" I said. "You will be declared subversive. Are you anti-war?"

"Aunty nothing," said Simple. "I am nobody's Aunt. I guess I am in this American country. You are a long way from white. Like God, Uncle Sam is drawn in his own image."

"Then how come he claims to be my Uncle," asked Simple, "he bears no likeness to me, and I bear none to him?"

"Maybe you are his step child," I said.
"I am not even his godchild," said Simple, "because he does not give a so-and-so for me. I were brought here black on a slave ship against my will, worked in the cotton and the cane for 200 years black for nothing—they owe my great-grandparents one billion dollars free labor—and me, try as I might black, I get nowhere. It is like running in a vicious circle. I run backwards. White folks tell me, 'Look at Ralph Bunche.' They say, 'Look at ME.' "They say, 'In the past one hundred years, colored folks have made so much progress.' I say, "White folks have made ten thousand times more by stepping on my head. You can vote in Waycross, Georgia, over Can I? Yet and still, I am supposed to go over fight in Germany, not Georgia. How do you sound?""
"I am sorry not his godchild," said Simple, "because he does not give a co-and-se for me. I were brought here to these slave ships against my will, worked for 200 years for nothing—black great—thay owe my grandparents one billion dollars free labor—and me, try as I might, get nowhere. It is like running in a vicious circle. Now I am supposed to go and fight for Berlin.

The majority rufes," I said. "You are a part of America. So, if America says go fight for Berlin, you are due to go and fight."

"It were but a short time ago that Berlin was fighting me," said Simple, "also putting Jews in gas ovens. Tell me, please, why Negroes and Jews should be wanting to fight for Berlin?"

"When it comes to war," I said, "Americans are not separated into races and religions and classes. Against the enemy, it is all for one and one for all, white and colored."

"I'll bet Mississippi has WHITE and COLORED air raid shelters," said Simple.

"I bet Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas, too," I said. "But air raid shelters will be of little value against atoms and hydrogen. Besides, one would have to dig up the whole American earth to make enough shelters for everybody. If I were you, I would not worry about shelters."

"Probably you are right," said Simple. "What we Negroes should worry about is, will there be Jim Crow on them rockets to the moon? The moon will probably be the only safe place, seems like all them launching pads for rockets is down in Florida, which is a Jim Crow state. I have not read yet about no colored astronauts."

"Neither have I," I said. "But I doubt if you will ever get to ride a rocket to the moon. Have you?"

"Not as long as there is beer on Lenox Avenue," said Simple.