

ANSWER ME, WILLIE
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The following recounts a true incident, which occurred about two months ago on one of the floors at The Medical Center. In past times, this would have been recorded only as an amusing story of no particular importance; in these days of race consciousness and conscience, it undoubtedly assumes "social significance." If it does, we will leave the interpretation up to those extremists, left and right, whose prejudices seem in constant need of being strengthened.

Bob Talley had operated upon a small, colored boy. The child, about 5 or 6 years of age, was alone in a semi-private room attended by his mother for most of the day. At night, or at mealtime, the youngster was left all alone in his alien environment. Whenever this happened, little Willie immediately began to cry. The rooms at The Medical Center are connected by a communication system of wall speakers to the nursing desk, and this particular evening, Willie's crying was so prolonged and anguished the nurse at the desk became worried.

Over the intercom, she asked. "Willie, what's the matter?"

There was no reply, only louder crying.

"Willie, is anything wrong?"

The wailing continued.

"Willie, is something hurting you?"

More crying.

Finally, in exasperation and in an authoritative voice, the nurse demanded.

"Now, Willie, you stop that crying immediately! Do you hear?"

Silence followed.

After an interval when nothing more was heard over the intercom, the nurse became concerned.

"Willie, are you there?"

No answer.

"Willie, are you all right? Do you feel well?"

Silence.

"Can you hear me, Willie?"

Silence again.

Then, once more in irritation. "Willie! Now you answer me right now!"

A frightened little voice came back: "What you want, Wall?"

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